SpaceGamer
FantasyGamer

Jan/Feb 1989
Number 85
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# FRANK CHADWICK's. . .

Also: Project File: Discovery (Morrow Project), Slow Train Coming (Invasion U.S.), Gloranthan Metals, Eeffug The Giant, and The Giant Squid (Runequest), Starjammer Yacht and Corsair Contention (Traveller), Mechwarrior Aliens, A Fistful Of Laughs (Toon), plus reviews of Buck Rogers, GURPS 3rd Ed., and Space Combat, and much more!

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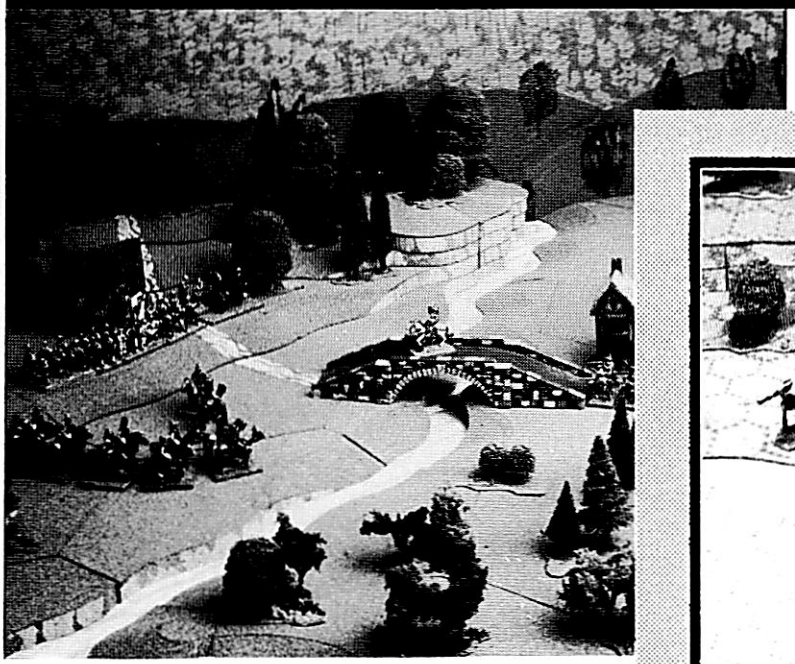

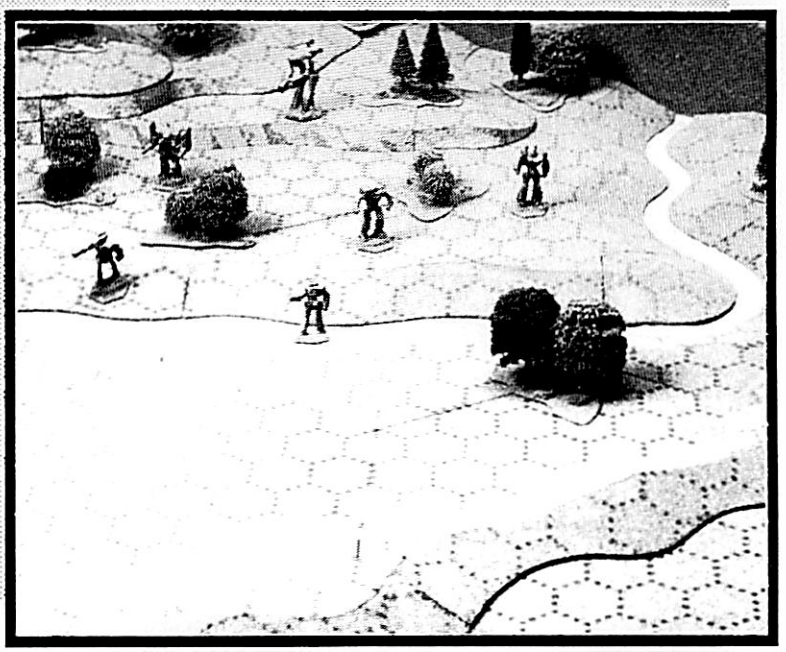

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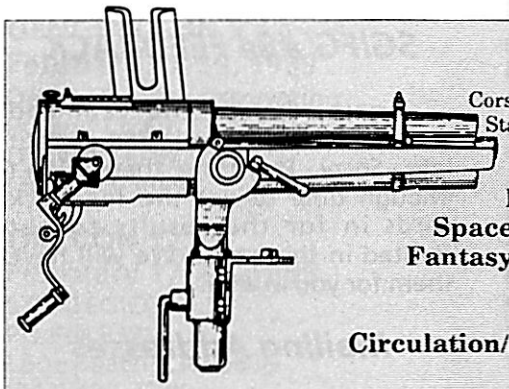

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# Editorial

1989: The last year of the decade of the 1980's, a decade that has seen many changes in our hobby.

When you talk to gamers who lived through the so-called "Golden Age" of the hobby (1976-1981), and ask them what the most important changes/events/etc. of the hobby were in the 1980's, they would mention the growth of RPG's and computer games, along with the introduction of both **Warhammer** and **Warhammer 40k** miniature rules, while some of us board-gamers would mention the fall of ***SPI***, ***OSG***, ***Metagaming***, and the other companies that are no longer with us, who brought growth to the hobby in the late 1970's, and since their fall, the declining numbers of gamers entering the historical gaming market, both in board-games and miniatures.

But enough of that, let's get on with what's happening in this issue. We are pleased to preview **SPACE 1889** from ***GDW***, and after reading the article, I feel that most of you will be pleased with the game.

Also in this issue, we have a preview of some upcoming **Rune-quest** material from ***Chaosium*** concerning Gloranthan Metals, plus the return of Finieous Fingers to the pages of this magazine, along with our usual features, and a fine group of scenarios and variants for your playing pleasure.

## What? No Hero HOTLine!

Due to the year-end rush, ***Hero Games*** was unable to send us any material for the **Hero HOTLine**, but they promised us something good for **#86**.

## SGIFG #84 FEEDBACK

Again, due to the year-end rush, and the U.S. mail, **#84** got out late - *Sorry*. Therefore, there wasn't enough time to get the feedback cards in for the results to get printed in this issue. We will have them for you in **#86**.

## Mailing Addresses

For subs, back issues, and ad rate cards, please contact our Cambria office. Articles, artwork, feedback, and letters should be mailed to the ***DTI*** address: P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808.


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(303) 433-3849

**ORCCON 12**
**February 17-20, 1989**
STRATEGICON
PO Box 8399
Long Beach, CA 90808
(213) 420-3675

**FAL'CON '89**
**February 17-19, 1989**
FAL'CON '89
PO Box 492
Meridian, MS 39302
(601)693-0382

**OMACON 8.5**
**February 18th, 1989**
Star Realm
7305 S. 85th St.
Omaha, NE 68128

**PROVOCATION'89**
**February 24-26, 1989**
Provocation
PO Box 63, Station M
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H1V 3R2
(514) 729-9808

**OWLCON X**
**March 17-19, 1989**
RSFAFA
PO Box 1892
Houston, YX 77251

**COAST CON X11**
**March 17-19, 1989**
COAST CON, Inc.
PO Box 1423
Bilioxi, MS 39533

**MAGNUM OPUS CON**
**March 17-19**
Magnum Opus Con
4315 Pio Nono Ave.
Macon, GA 31206

**ABBYTHON 7**
**March 18-19, 1989**
ABBYTHON
PO Box 96
Abbyville, KS 67510

**MARCH FANTASY REVEL**
**March 31-April 2, 1989**
March Fantasy Revel
2432 Park Ave., Apt 6
West Bend, WI 53096
(414) 338-8498

**TECHINICON 6**
**March 31-April 2**
TECHNICON
PO Box 256
Blacksburg, VA 24063-0256

**CONNCON**
**April 1-2, 1989**
Hobby Center
366 Main St.
Danbury, CT 06810

**GAME FAIRE'89**
**April 7-9, 1989**
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Danbury, CT 06810

**AMIGOCON 4**
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AMIGOCON 4
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El Paso, TX 79923

**SYNDICON 3**
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Syndicon
PO Box 39A1
Chicago, IL 60690

**ONCE UPON A CON**
**April 28-30, 1989**
Once Upon A Con
P.O. Box 16436
Colorado Springs, CO 80935

**UMF-CON'89**
**April 29-30, 1989**
UMF-CON
5 South St.
Farmington, ME 04938

**MISCON 4**
**May 5-7, 1989**
MISCON
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Missoula, MT 59807
(406) 549-1435

**MOBI-CON'89**
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MOBI-CON
PO Box 161257
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(205) 661-4060

**MICHICON GAMEFEST '89**
**June 16-18, 1989**
Metro Detroit Gamers
PO Box 656
Wyandotte, MI 48192

**L.A. ORIGINS'89**
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**DOVERCON V**
**July 8-9, 1989**
DOVERCON V
PO Box 753
Dover, NH 03820

**GATEWAY'89**
**Sept. 1-4, 1989**
STRATEGICON
PO Box 8399
Long Beach, CA 90808
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# SCANNER

*The following products have been, or are scheduled to be released soon:*

## *Aircel Comics*

**Gun Fury** - One good man vs. the forces of evil and corruption.
**Demon Hunter** - A man must deal with assassins and demons.

## *Cutting Edge Games*

**Slasher** - A card game parody of the horror films, and will sell for $12.00. For more information, write to ***Cutting Edge Games***, 2030 E. Lemon St., Tempe, AZ 85281.

## *Eastman Kodak*

**Robots** - A VCR SF murder mystery game based off Isaac Asimov's novels **The Caves In The Sun** and **The Naked Sun**. The tape will cost $39.95, and is being sold by ***Via Video:*** (800) 950-8686, ext. 700.

## *Eternity Comics*

**Street Heros 2005** - A new comic book series teaming up a cop and a superhero in the year 2005.
**Blind Fear** - A Sherlock Holmes mini-series
Also, ***Etenity*** is working on a **Robin Hood** and **Jack The Ripper series**, which they hope to have out by summer.

## *Future Combat Simulations*

**STARBATTLES (The Card Game)** - An exciting new, fast -paced introductory level card game of deep space ship combat! Due out in spring of '89.

## *Heathen Thorn Enterprises (HTE)*

**Pizza Wars** - A boardgame that will "Eat your competition out of power!"
**Pizza Wars Imperium** - Become Imperator of the Realm is this new boardgame.
**Tyrants Of Yitar** - Compete with others to become the Priest King in this easy to learn boardgame.
Also, ***HTE*** has **The Oracle**, a supplement for their **Horde Fantasy Gaming Society**, plus the **Horde Propaganda**, their newsletter. For more info, write to 4711 Luerssen Ave., Baltimore, MD 21206

## *Palladium Books*

**Robotech: The REF Field Guide** - extra material for the **Invid Invasion** and the **Sentinels** RPG.
**The Compendium Of Weapons And Armor** - Sourcebook for ancient weapons, armor, castles, siege equipment. Some new info, but mainly the material from their previous works.
**Box Nightmares** - Supplement for **Beyond The Supernatural.**
**Adventures In The Northern Wilderness** - Supplement for the **Palladium RPG.**
Both of these products are expected to be released in the spring.
Also, ***Palladium*** expects to release at least 2 **Robotech** products, as well as 4-6 products for their other RPG's.

## *GDW*

**Challenge Magaxine #35**
**Satellite Down** - A module for **Twilight: 2000**

## *Strategic Simulations, Inc. (SSI)*

**Hillsfar** - **AD&D** adventure for the IBM PC and the C-64/128.
Also, ***SSI*** has a **Pool Of Radiance** culebook available for $12.95

## *TSR, Inc.*

**Brushfire Wars** - An anthology of short adventures for **TOP SECRET/S.I.**
**Web Of Deceit** - A **TOP SECRET/S.I.** module.
**DLE-1, In Search of Dragons** - A **DRAGONLANCE** module.
**Hall Of Heros** - A **Forgotten Realms** accessory listing the major NPC's of the realms.

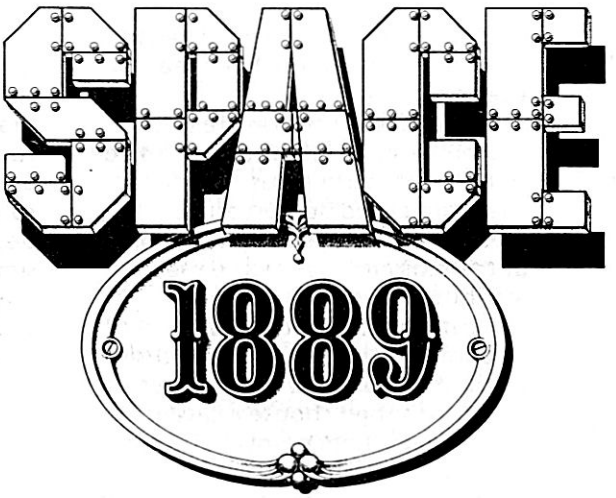
## *The Adventurer's Guild*

The ***AG*** puts out the following products:
**Griffon Magazine** - Contains fantasy adventures, variants, etc. It is published 6 times a year.
Also, they make armor and costumes, and do portaits, and produce FRP aids. For more information, write to ***The Adventurers' Guild***, 401 New Castle Road, Marshalltown, IA 50158.

## *Sir-Tech Software*

**Wizardry V: Heart Of The Maelstrom** - For the Apple II and IBM that does not require the previous **Wizardry** games.
**The Usurper: Mine Of Qyntarr** - A fantasy adventure the Apple II and IBM.

**SCANNER** is always looking for more news/gossip. Send all press releases, products, scandal sheets, etc. to **SCANNER**: PO Box 8399, Long Beach, CA 90808




# The Royal Crown Colony of Syrtis Major?

# The Imperial Space Age is Here!

**Game Concept and System Design: Frank Chadwick**
**Produced by: *GDW***
**Complexity: Medium**
**Product Type: Hardbound Sourcebook**
**Play Value: High**
**Price: $30.00**
**Reviewed: G. E. Smith**

"Welcome to the world of **Space: 1889**, a world filled with scientific wonders, strange civilizations, international intrigue, and, of course, adventure. **Space: 1889** is a science-fiction role-playing game, but with one difference: It is set in the 19th century at the height of Victorian colonial expansion."

So opens the introduction to ***GDW's*** initial offering in their newest line of role-playing products. The concept of having the Victorians get into space has been percolating in this hobby for nearly 10 years. On the surface, it seems rather too-far-fetched. After all, look at the money, effort and troubles both the US and USSR have had to deal with in getting the 20th century into space. On the other hand, the late 19th century saw such innovative and far-thinking writers as Jules Verne, H. G. Wells and A. Conan Doyle actually tackle this concept and "succeed". Edgar Rice Burroughs in his **John Carter** series (although writing in the first years of the 20th century) painted a Mars of receded seas, failing canals, exotic civilized and barbaric Martian kingdoms as well as sky ships using a principle unknown on Earth. ***GDW*** has distilled out the essence and inventiveness of these authors, imparted Frank Chadwick's extensive knowledge of that century and has had their design staff develop a role-playing system that makes everything **work**. Anyway, if we can have RPG's based on characters being intelligent cats and dogs, certainly Victorian England can be covered!

So, what are gamers physically getting? ***GDW*** has produced a 216 page hardbound book (the basic rules set, so to speak) with 24 pages of color artwork (some by Frank Chadwick himself) as well as good illustrations by many folks whose work you've seen elsewhere and one 13 page introductory adventure. The last 16 pages are on near-cardstock paper and are perforated for removal. The contain charts and tables necessary for playing the game. The package itself is sharp, the tag line "Science Fiction Role Playing in a More Civilized Time" sums up the spirit of what we are about to receive. What about the steak beyond the sizzle?

***GDW*** started out as a 100% wargame oriented company when it began the **Europa** product line in the early 70's. However, they moved into the science-fiction role-playing genre with the publication of the **Traveller** series a couple of years later, branching off of that into **Twilight: 2000** and **MegaTraveller**, then adding in **2300 AD**. With this kind of background there is no need to worry about whether the system works or not, the questions are; how well does the system cope with the tasks to be done, how easy is the system to operate, and how evocative is is of the time and circumstances it intends to portray?

**Space: 1889** uses a streamlined system apparently refined from **2300 AD**, which in turn is simplified a bit from **Twilight: 2000**. (Having done 4 role-playing systems, ***GDW*** designers tend towards improving systems as well as inventing them.) **Space** characters have 6 attributes to create, **2300 AD** characters have 8 and **Twilight: 2000** have 6. The **Space** 6 are: Strength, Agility, Endurance, Intellect, Charisma and

(the all-important for proper Victorians) Social Level. The latter helps immeasurable to foster the proper roleplaying spirit, as a character from a member of the landed gentry will treat a tradesmen far different from a member of the aristocracy. In fact, the essence of properly "playing" this game will not be following the rules but reproducing the correct atmosphere.

These 6 attributes are rated from 1 to 6, with higher numbers being better. Players are given 3 ways to generate the points for these attributes. They can take a total of 21 points and distribute them out over the 6 areas. Or, they can assign a number from 1-6 to each attribute, but never use the same number twice. (***GDW*** recommends this for your first character in this system. I believe that first-time players should consider this method. Experienced gamers will do better to distribute the points as they see fit.) Or, for those with a gambling nature, players may roll a D6 and the resulting number is the attribute total. The average dice roll on a D6 is 3.5 and with 6 rolls the average generated number is 21. You may, of course, roll more and become a hero in your own mind, or roll less and ". . . experience the challenge of role-playing a randomly generated character." (Okay, so you can add enough points to reach 18 total if you roll short.)

**Space** is destined for sale in bookstores (hence the hardbound book format) thus being exposed to a market that may not have much, if indeed any experience with RPG's. The rules are therefore constructed with those folks in mind. The dice used, for example, are the 6 sided variety (3 needed) found in every home. Hence too, the text is written in a user-friendly, one-step-at-a-time style geared for primary gamers. Which also means that it may take a paragraph of explanatory text to get to the rule being documented. Not to worry, the experienced gamer should find the explanations and information a refreshing change from some of the drier texts many games have laid on us. ***GDW*** has worked hard to position these rules so that beginners and experienced hands both can derive value from reading everything.

Once the attributes are set, players receive skills that are linked to the 6 attribute areas. The first of these are called default skills, meaning the player has some ability at them directly related to their attribute level For example, Fisticuffs is a default skill of Strength, equal to 1 less than the attribute total (max. would then be 5). Players then choose a career which gives them points to buy (or increase levels in) skills, as well as Career skills that they pick up or add into previously acquired ones.

Careers available are the proper ones you would expect: Military service, Foreign/Colonial Office (diplomats), Explorers, Detectives, Merchants, Wealthy Nobility, etc. Not-so-proper ones are Master Criminal, Thieves, Smugglers and Anarchists. Creation time runs 10-15 minutes except for Inventors, where you can easily double the time. This is because the numerous options and creative paths open will cause players to explore carefully to find the area they wish to specialize in.

In deciding on a career path, players need to be paying attention to what **Cascade** skills (if any) will be useful. Cascade skills are those where an ability in the primary skill (i.e. assigning points to it) carries over into other related ones, meaning you get more abilities for a lesser cost. For example, building up 4 points in the cascade skill Crime means a player has a skill level of 4 in their "major", say lockpicking and half that (2) in the other related skills (pickpocket and forger).

What, you say, lockpicking and forging aren't really related? Probably true, but again ***GDW*** has gone for the overall effect, which is simplicity (NOT simpleness). Too many exceptions to the governing rules and you end up with the exceptions being the bulk of the rules. This system has been designed around the concept of simplicity of structure, depth in play. In fact **2300 AD** and **Twilight: 2000** are other, more mainstream system examples (though more "complicated" in their simplicity, if you get my drift) of this philosophy. Which means, there are a large number of things the players and referees can do within the structure of the rules, all of which are simple to use and execute. ***GDW*** expects the players (especially the referee) to complicate the actual gaming to their own level. In other words, they provide you with the perfectly grilled, tender and hot steak. You season it to taste and add the side dishes.

An example of how this has evolved along might be helpful. A player taking part in a RPG might figure that the 1 skill they really want to go for high numbers in would be Strength. In **Twilight: 2000**, one rolls 4D6-4 to obtain the attribute total. Zeroes may be rolled over. To favor an attribute one must slight another accordingly. To quote: "A favored attribute is adjusted upward to halfway between the actual result of the attribute roll and 20, rounding fractions down [=(4D6 + 1602]." In **2300 AD**, one creates Strength by rolling 4D6-4 and can modify it by choosing from 4 body types, which can add up to 4 to whatever is rolled. Zeroes (or any low total) can be rolled, buy only 2 attributes total can be rerolled. In **Space: 1889** the player can assign a number from 1-6 to Strength out of 21 total points or distribute points amongst all 6 attributes, favoring Strength so long as all attributes are covered (no zeroes) and no number repeats (i.e. you can't have 2 attributes of value 4). This kind of streamlining is evident throughout the **Space** rules.

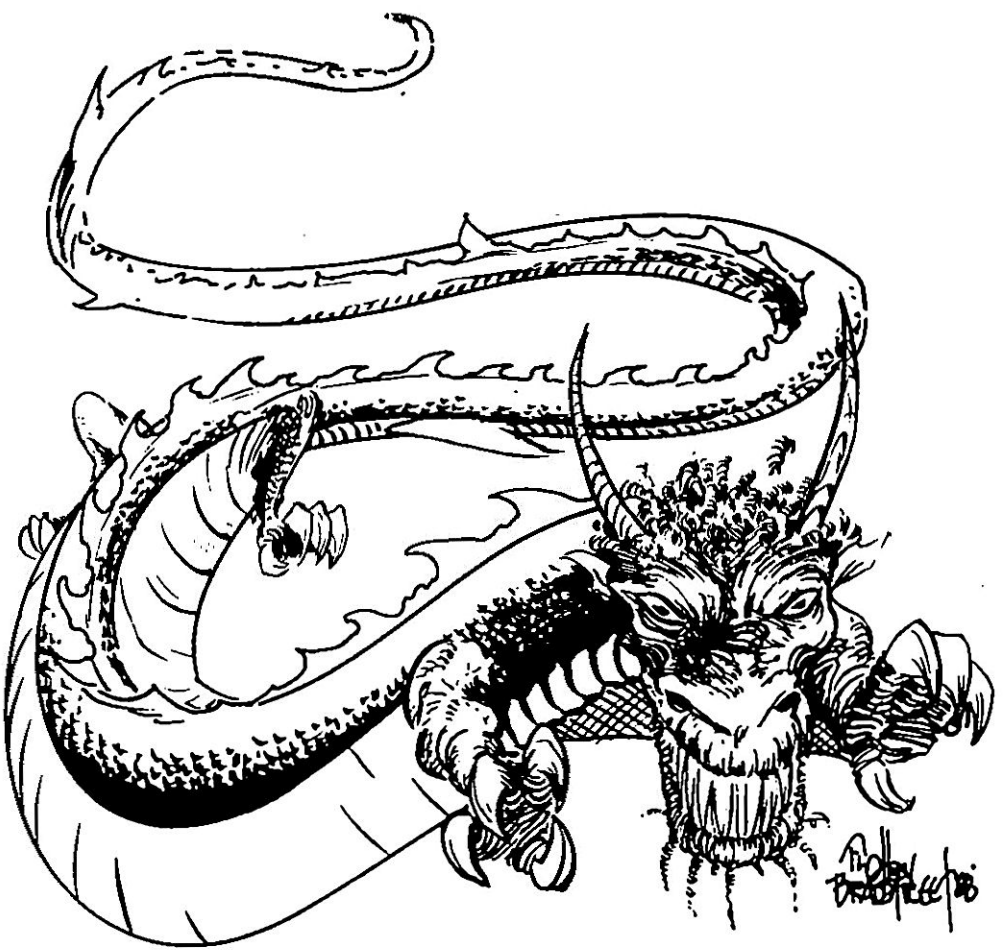
Resolution of action is via the Task system ***GDW*** favors, supplemented by a Quick Roll method. Basically the Task system has the referee assign a degree of difficulty to a particular action or task. Each player has a Target level to reach by dice rolling to succeed. For example, the referee may decide that climbing a rocky slope will be a **Difficult** action, which has a target level of **12** and the player will need to use their Endurance attribute number, which is 3. The player must then roll 3 dice (1 for each point of the attribute or skill being tested) to beat a 12. As you can see, someone with a level of 5 is going to roll **5** dice to beat a 12.

Or, the referee may resolve this action with a Quick Roll, indicating that the player roll less than or equal to their endurance attribute level. ***GDW*** has set no "hard and fast" rules here: referees are given guideline on how to resolve actions and are left to keep the action flowing. Some people don't for this concept because they would much rather have a rule tell them what to do as opposed to **indicate** what path to take. As a referee/GM/DM myself, I welcome a rules system that says "use your common sense and go for it!" because most referee's/GM's/DM's do so in one way or another. Real life is not laid out with finite rules and so neither so role-playing, at least not totally. But there does have to be a feeling of logic and continuity so that players "know" that events and actions are impossible or possible or probable and are most always repeatable as such. While I can't say that I wrung out this system to the max in order to prove or discredit any part of it (yet), the parentage of **Space: 1889** is such that my travels so far have been with a minimum of disruption and a maximum of ease of comprehension. The fun of a game is rarely just following rules themselves, instead it's the game that comes out playing those rules. This is one of those games.

So, given this character generation/task resolving system, where do players go from there? What, for example, kind of technology and equipment are available for use? Frankly, everything you've ever read in the previously mentioned authors books is on display in this game. Naturally character are going to be able to equip themselves with "modern" Victorian travel items such as carpet bags, gramophones, 10-man tents, steamer trunks, rough-living clothing, dissecting kits (Jack the Ripper is a product of a Victorian home, you know) and the like. One can wield swords, bows and throwing knives as well as Colt Single Action Army .44 caliber pistols, Winchester and Lee Metford rifles, Gatling guns and Maxim heavy machineguns. All quite useful and historical.

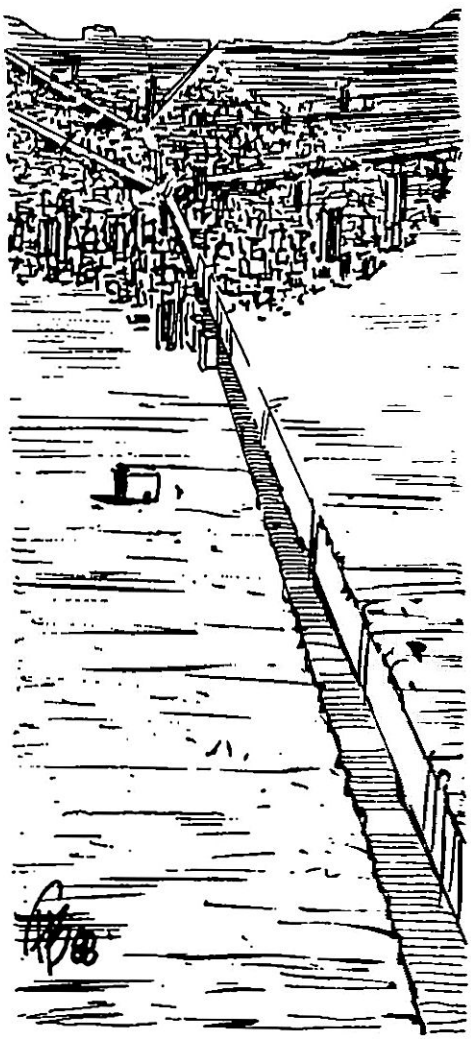
But, once you stray on to page 62, the seasoning we spoke of earlier begins to tempt you. This page begins the Inventions section wherein player inventors may concoct such fun items as Lightning Cannons, Mind Control Rays, Transparent Aluminum, Electric Rifles, Synthetic Life, Underwater Guns, and Aspirin. Every mad scientist's dream from every novel of the time is here for use by players and NPC's. This is why I mentioned that Inventors will have to pick their paths carefully: You can't have it all! For those of you who simply can't live without your **Robotech**, you can have armed Walking Tripods (which bear a noticeable likeness to something I saw in the H. G. Wells book **War of the Worlds**. Hmmmm, weren't they armed with weapons powered by lenses that focused rays from the sun? See page 71 for details on Heat Rays.). For those of you who have **Sky Galleons of Mars**, there are a few inventions and items that are given in that game format so players can adapt them for their own ships.

One of the best sections of this game is the background chapter entitled The Victorian Age. With a few swift paragraphs and sidebars, a fairly complete outline of the people and times of this era are given. There's not enough to bore you (and may even spur you to read up more on this fascinating time)



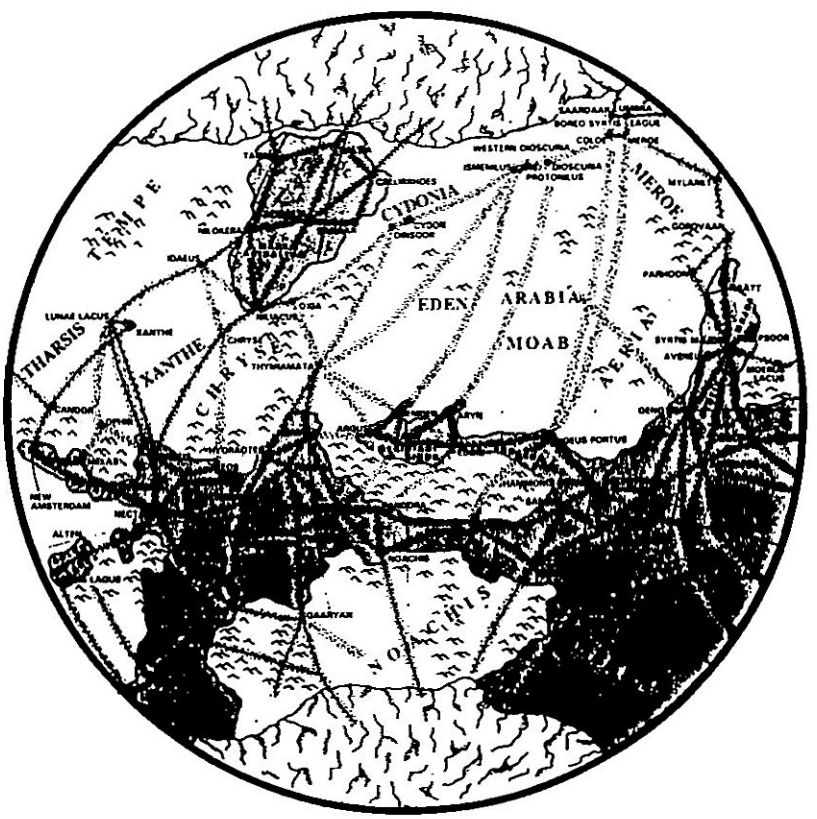
but more than enough to let you try and paint your character or situation in the proper British colors. Sections cover the various classed in English society, the military establishment and Victorian women.

Victorians were somewhat "Yuppish" in that they were fascinated with technology, strove for status and believed that the "outer" person you showed others was more important than the "inner" person you really were. Of course, people acted more moral and more civilized then because you were **expected** to believe in those concepts, or at least live by them. (Paladins take note.) Actually, these ideas might not be bad things to role-play. You sure can't say that we don't need more of them in our world.



**Space** has continued the ***GDW*** tradition of including ship design as part of the gaming package. **Sky Galleons** allowed players to build liftwood flyers capable of atmospheric travel and now **Space** allows players to build interplanetary vessels capable of exploring anywhere from Mercury out to some of the asteroids. How do the Victorians manage to deal with the vacuum of space, cosmic rays, solar flares, power generation, etc.? Very well, thank you. You do believe in Orcs, don't you? A quick example of how they deal with the sorts of things mentioned above might be to look at interplanetary navigation using an Astronavigtion Computer, which is: "An automatic device for astronavigatio, automatically adjusting the controls of an ether flyer when set for a given destination and calculating the most economical course." That's it. You buy one, it works.

Well, where for now can you go in the **Space: 1889** universe? Obviously, you can adventure anywhere on Earth using liftwood flyers built here (you can even just plain role-play the Victorian Era, if you really want to). The primary planet of focus is Mars, with about 40 pages devoted to background material. Travels to the swamps of Venus (you knew that Venus would follow tradition, didn't you?) are also popular, **Space** assigning 12 pages of material there. Luna (the moon for you non-science folks) has an actual mini-module incorporated into the rules, even though other parts of the game indicate that there isn't really anything of value there. Travel to Mercury and the asteroids is mentioned as possible, but aside from a paragraph or two of material and a few charts, players for now will have to either be creative or forego the trip. Mars itself ought to occupy things for quite a while. Besides, we have to have room for expansion modules, don't we?



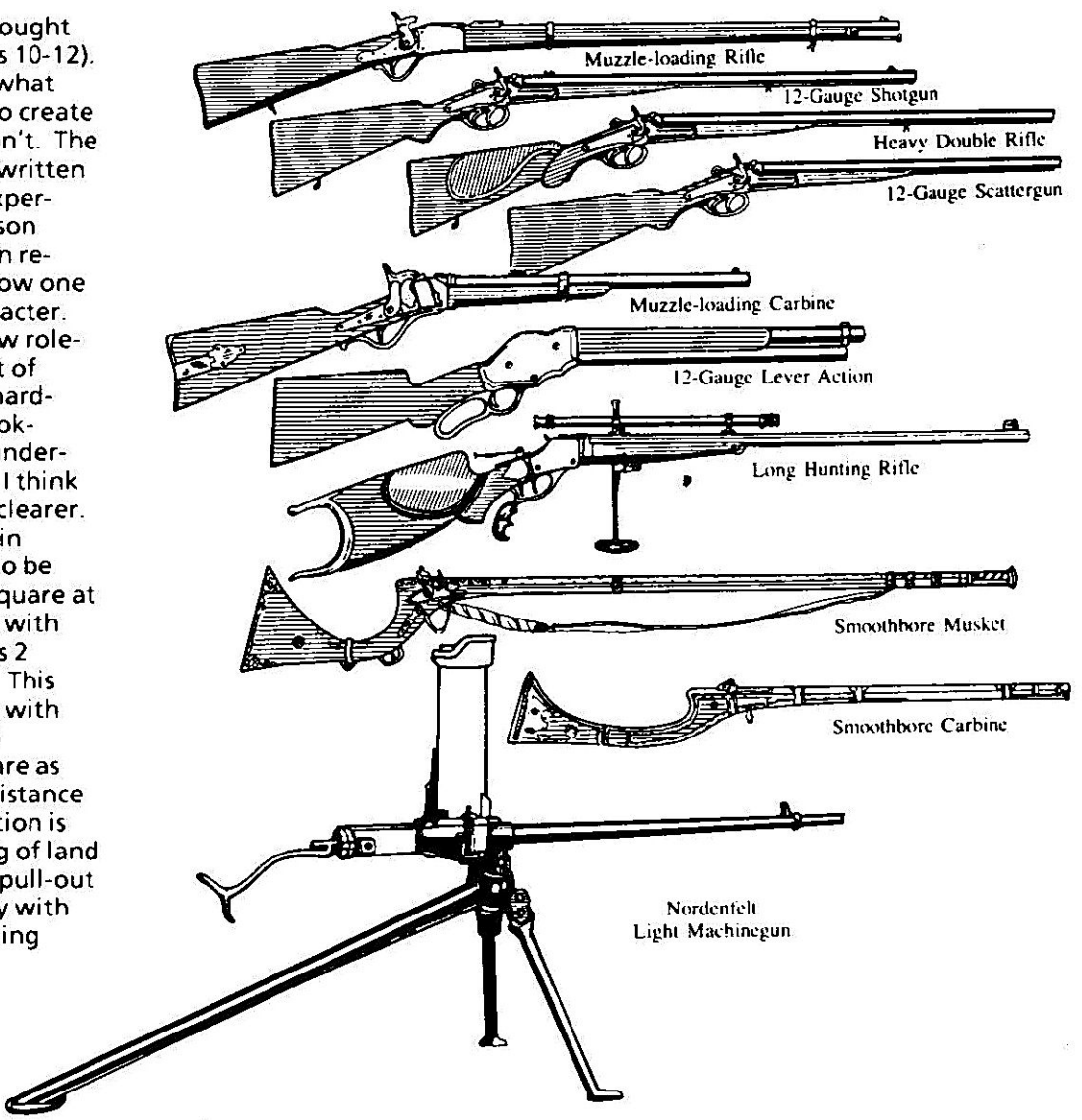
There are some complaints that I have, the first one being that the layout of the rules sections involves a bit more skipping around than I like, or that new gamers should have to do. I think the rules should flow as: Characters, The Referee, Combat, Science and Equipment and then the background material. ***GDW*** includes background after Characters then gets into The Referee and then Equipment, Science and Combat. My experience has been that players (and refs) want to know how to build a character, see how combat and magic/science works AND THEN decide on gear and spells/ inventions. To be fair, this is purely subjective and it may be ***GDW*** has had a different experience in playtesting than mine.

Second, the skills and Careers sections must be closely to understand how skills are bought and acquired (especially pgs 10-12). Experienced gamers know what they consider "necessary" to create a character, new gamers don't. The rules right here seem to be written just enough more for the experienced gamer that new person might have to read and then re-read again to understand how one builds up the skills of a character. When a company aims a new role-playing product at a market of neophytes (remember the hard-bound book format and book-stores), clarity and ease of understanding are vital for sales. I think this area should have been clearer.

Floorplans and combat in **Space: 1889** are supposed to be diagramed on maps using square at 2 yards per square. Moving with the grain square to square is 2 yards, diagonally is 3 yards. This type of system is in keeping with simplicity (and goes back to **Traveller**) but surely hexes are as easy and less distorting of distance travelled, even if the distortion is small? For general mapping of land a hex sheet is provided as a pull-out for photocopying. Why stay with squares when you're providing hexsheets?

Another nit here is that combat is described **before** movement (7 pages earlier, in fact) whereas movement ought to have gone first. Also, to run in this game you get some 20 yards each action phase of a turn (generally 4, maybe up to 6) plus the total of the number of dice you roll, the # of dice thrown is equal to the Agility attribute total for the character. In this case, let's say the number of dice to roll is 4. Which means on an open plain with no obstacles, you could run anywhere between 24 and 48 yards in one action phase. Obviously this produces a rather jerky running form! Yes, it averages out, but is somewhat annoying to deal with this kind of action in this manner.

If you haven't guessed by now, the Space: 1889 system encompasses a serious game, produced by serious game designers who have got their tongues lovingly but firmly in their cheeks, at least in the technology areas. But it all seems to work wonderfully well and is a delight to read and work with, as well as play. Seasoned role-players may have qualm or two with ***GDW's*** design philosophy, but **Space: 1889** is meant to be **FUN**; with adventurous characters engaged in heroic daring-do on exotic foreign shores against opponents of Great Britain and all she stands for. There is a quote taken from a British naval officer, thru his interpreter when he was surrounded by an angry mob: "Tell these ugly bastards that I am not going to tolerate any more of their bestial habits." This sums up the mind-set of the British military during the Victorian Era. Buy and Enjoy it.



# The *Starjammer* Class Yacht

## A 200-Ton Starship for Traveller

### By Gary Reilly

Despite the luxury accommodations offered by the major starliners, many wealthy starfarers prefer to operate personal starships in their travel. This allows them greater freedom of movement. However, the selection of a small personal craft does not automatically mean that one must give up amenities. The Starjammer Class Yacht is designed especially for the independently minded traveller with refined tastes. Packed into its 200-ton hull are many extras that make interstellar travel a bit more bearable.

The Sheldon Jump Drive (JD) provides the Starjammer with a jump-3 capability, allowing travel throughout many portions of the populated galaxy. The Royce Starrunner Maneuver Drive (MD) generates a respectable maximum acceleration acceleration of 4g's. Both drives receive plentiful power from the Sith'Asal Power Plant (PP) with its power rating of 4. The fuel tanks (F) hold a total of 68 tons of propellants. The fuel designated for the Power Plant is stored in the smaller tank on C Deck.

Accommodations for the ship's owner and up to three fellow passengers are found on A Deck. Two large double-occupancy staterooms (S), complete with freshers (FR), provide comfortable quarters. The spacious common area (COM) amidships contains the latest in entertainment equipment to help make the passenger's journey enjoyable. The travellers may also take their meals in this area, served by one of the ship's stewards. Meals for the passengers are prepared by the stewards in the galley (G) near the common area. Iris values separate the passenger section from the rest of the vessel to give the passengers maximum privacy.

The Starjammer's crew complement numbers six (Pilot, Navigator, two Engineers, two Stewards). They are housed in the crew's quarters located on B deck. The three double-occupancy staterooms (S) are less spacious than those of the passengers, but nonetheless, provide comfortable berths. In addition, the yacht provides a separate galley (G) and communal fresher (FR) for the crew's use. Two ship's lockers (L) may also be found on the crew deck. One is equipped with an electronically-locked iris value, providing secure storage for personal weapons and acts as a safe for the passenger's valuables. The other locker contains repair tools, spare parts and other common material.

The ship's bridge (B) occupies the forward section of A Deck. In addition to the avionics (AV), the bridge contains the Starmind Model 1 Bis computer (CP) and fire control for the yacht's two weapons turrets. The model shown includes triple turrets (one mounted with two pulse lasers and sandcaster, the other outfitted with twin pulse lasers and missile rack) in the base price. The two stewards double as gunners in the event that battle stations are sounded.

The passengers access the vessel via the air lock (AL) to the rear of their quarters on A Deck. The crew utilize the air lock on B Deck, whose exterior hatch opens through the deck floor.

At the rear of a A Deck lies a small cargo hold (CH) with a 12-ton capacity. A large sliding hatch on the sloping rear wall allows access by a variety of vehicles including air cars, grav sleds, etc. The base price shown does not include the additional cost of such an auxiliary vehicle.

**Crew Roster**

1 Pilot
1 Navigator
2 Engineers
2 Stewards

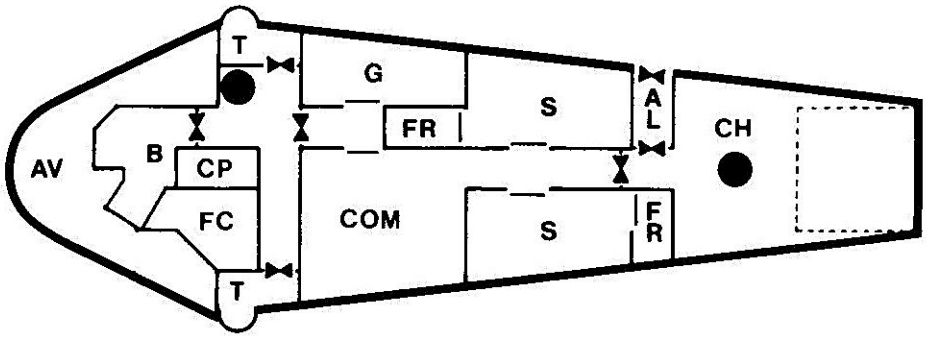
6 Total

**Technical Specifications**

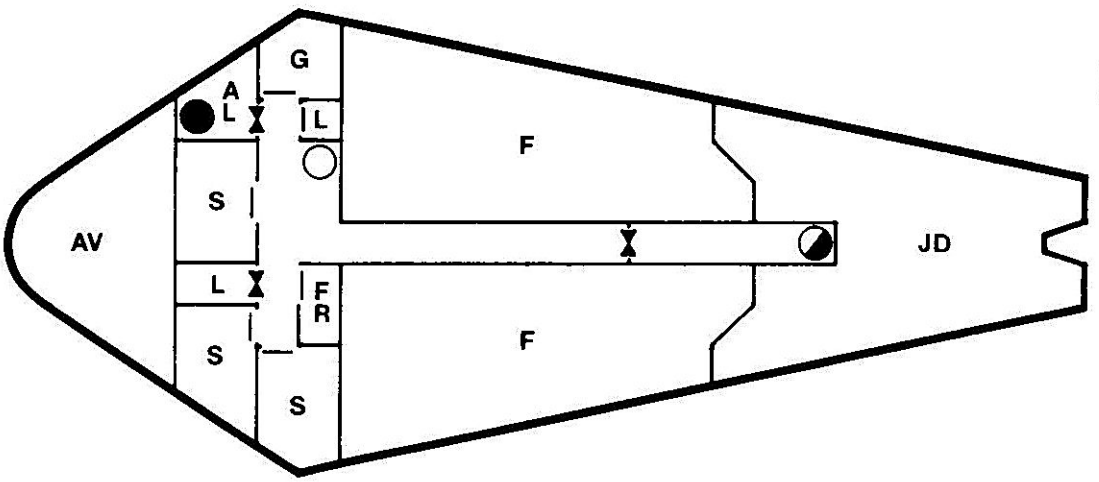
Length: 39.0 m.
Beam: 16.5 m.
Displacement: 200 Tons
Hull Configuration: Modified Cylinder/Cone Atmospherically Streamlined
Jump Drive: Sheldon Lightjump C-20, Max Jump 3
Maneuver Drive: Royce Starrunner D7000, Max Acceleration 4g.
Power Plant: Sith'Asal Pulsar Mod 13D, Power Rating 4
Fuel Capacity: 68 Tons
Avionics: 20 Tons
Computer: Starmind Model 1 Bis
Fire Control: 2 Tons
Quarters: 2 Passenger Cabins, 3 Crew Cabins
Ship Armaments: 2 Triple Turrets
Turret #1-2 Pulse Lasers/ 1 Sandcaster
Turret #2-2 Pulse Lasers/ 1 Missile Rack
Cargo Capacity: 12 Tons
Auxiliary Vessels: None
Construction Costs: 102.2 MCr
Naval Architects: Morgardi Shipyards
Universal Ship's Profile (USP): Y-Starjammer Y-22344R1-010000-20001-0
Passengers = 4, Crew = 6
Cargo = 12, Fuel = 68, EP = 8, Agility = 2

**Deck Legend**

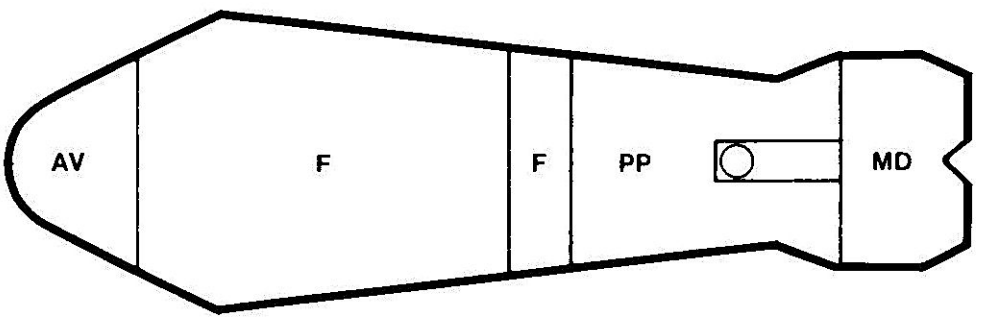
| | |
|---|---|
| AL | Air Lock |
| AV | Avionics |
| B | Bridge |
| CH | Cargo Hold |
| COM | Common Area |
| CP | Computer |
| F | Fuel |
| FC | Fire Control |
| FR | Fresher |
| G | Galley |
| JD | Jump Drive |
| L | Ship's Locker |
| MD | Maneuver Drive |
| PP | Power Plant |
| S | Stateroom |
| T | Turret |



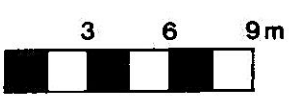

A Deck

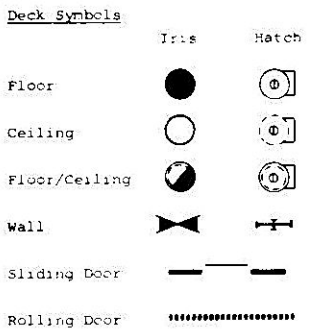



B Deck




C Deck

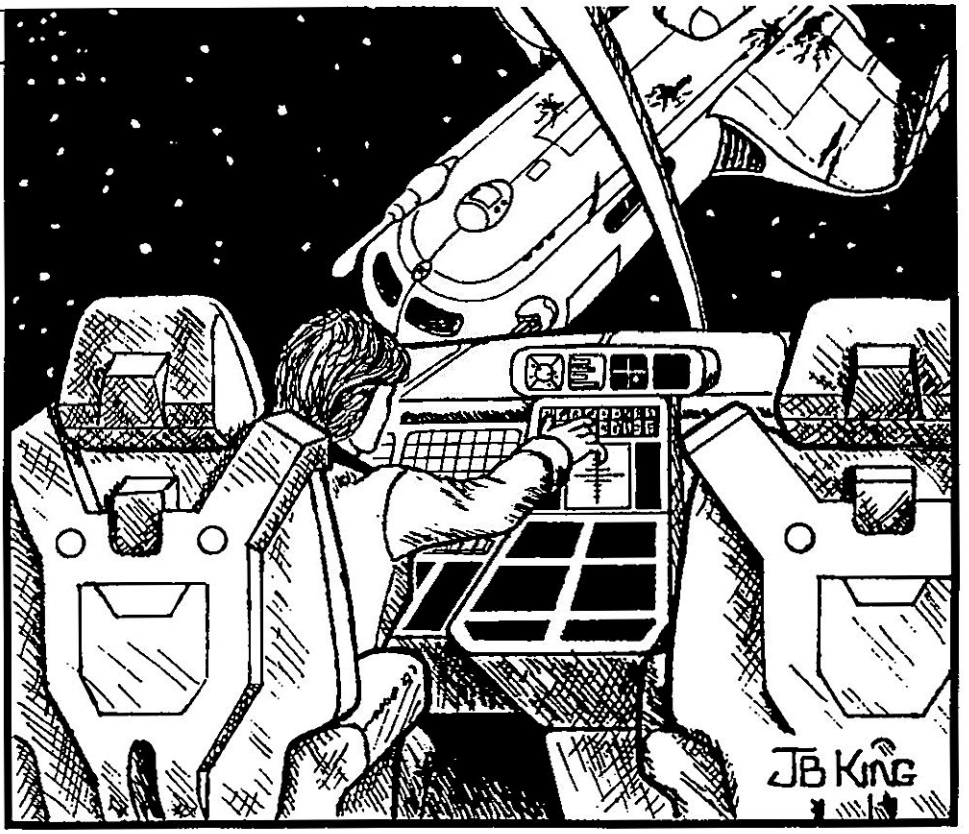


# Corsair Contention

## A MegaTraveller Scenario

**By James B. King**




### Introduction

This scenario is intended for use with **MegaTraveller**. To make it easier to use in a continuing campaign, no specific location of occurance is mentioned; virtually any frontier location would be appropriate, though the actual planet this adventure begins near should likely be one with a lower star port rating. It is not required that the PC's have their own ship. With a little modification to this scenario, they may simply be passengers or crew aboard a vessel of other ownership.

### Vessel In Distress

When the PC's ship exits jumpspace near their destination planet, they detect alternating signals GK and SOS ( see Signal GK - Imperial Encyclopedia). Radio communication reveals that the vessel, a subsidized merchant, was severely damaged by laser fire from a pirate corsair. Luckily, the merchant was armed and was able to return fire. Several hits were scored on the corsair, apparently doing damage, as the vessel ceased the attack and maneuvered away. Unfortunately, the merchant's maneuver and jump drives are now inoperative. As the vessel was decelerating to zero-maneuver prior to jump, it is now heading into deep space at an uncontrolled speed equivalent to one gravity. However, it is currently only a few thousand kilometers from the adventurer's ship.

As the PC's are likely aware, Imperial law requires that they respond to a vessel in distress. There are no other vessels in orbit, and, as the stricken merchant is now beyond 100 diameters out, it would take several hours for a craft to reach it from the planet (assuming one were even available).

As communication continues while the adventurers' ship maneuvers to the helpless merchant, the picture becomes more grim. The merchant's hull is pierced in several locations. Engineering is in vacuum, as is the cargo deck, and there are hull fractures in the passenger section that are leaking the atmosphere out faster than the life support can replace it. Although the ship does have a number of vac suits equal to the number of persons on board, as required by Imperial law for commercial transport, in reality, many are nonfunctional. Though the situation is serious enough, there is another even more urgent. In the attack, several passengers and crew were wounded, and one crew member was killed - the ship's doctor. A passenger with some medical skill (level 1) is attending to the wounded, but she is afraid one of them won't last until they can be transported planetside. (A low berth is not available. Most have been removed; the remaining are occupied.)

The merchant captain, very much short handed, pleads with the adventurers to make all haste to reach his ship and give aid. It should be quite clear by now that there is an urgent need for their assistance.

### Aid And Assistance

When the group arrives they will need to divide to work on tasks fitting their individual technical skills. The most urgent needs are medical attention for the wounded, restoring the hull's integrity, and restoring maneuver. Other task needs, such as electrical, can be created to involve PC's of other skills.

This is a good opportunity for the group to make new acquaintences with grateful passengers - travellers often need a favor themselves, and they may run into some of these people again (hang on to those NPC's).

### A Shadow

At least one of the group will have to stay aboard the PC's vessel as the pilot. If that person is operating detection sensors (which will likely be the case, knowing a pirate ship is in the area), they may detect a vessel maintaining a parallel trajectory at some distance. No transponder signal is detected, but radio transmissions are picked

up; they are in some form of code, or possibly an unfamiliar language.

The vessel is, in actuality, the damaged corsair. As the pirates lack beam communication gear, they are using a code to communicate with a second vessel that is maneuvering in from its station around a distant gas giant.

**Under Cover**

After the adventurers have successfully restored the ship's systems (or possibly while they are working on it), the captain (or apparent group leader) of the adventuring travellers is approached by one of the merchant's passengers, Victor LeClair, who requests to discuss an urgent matter in privacy. When they find such a location the man declares himself to be a field operative of Imperial Naval Intelligence. LaClair claims he has been under cover for several months inside a pirate organization - the very pirates who attacked the merchant. After discovering the locations of field bases and cache sites,he faked his death before leaving, so as to not alert the pirates at his disappearance. But they are apparently on to him, as the pirates' operations planning did not include a raid near the world they are currently close by. LeClair must get his information to Naval Intel., and he wants the PC's to take him to the nearest naval or scout base as quickly as possible. He will pay all costs to do so, and assures the group that they will be rewarded when he gets there. (Note: The base should be at least a couple of jumps distant.)

The PC's may question the validity of Victor LeClair's story. Using a small knife, LeClair slits the side of his boot sole and removes a patterned, plastic card. Not only is it proof of his identification and rank in Naval Intelligence, it is a Naval Warrant of Provision, more difficult to counterfeit than Imperial currency. It is with this that he will pay transportation costs. When used, Imperium-member worlds must supply any and all needs requested by its holder (within reason), which may even include the use of troop or commandeering a ship (LaClair can claim to commandeer the PC's ship, but he would prefer their cooperation, and he could hardly force them by himself if they resisted, though he may point out his official right). The proper naval agency later provides reimbursement for all provisions supplied.

(Note: The Spinward Marches, through Archduke Norris, has declared its continuing loyalty to the 3rd Imperium. In other regions of the fractured Imperium this loyalty no longer exists, and the Naval Warrant is useless in those regions. However, if this scenario is played out in such a region, and LeClair is an operative of the prevailing government's navy, similar Naval Warrants would likely be issued.)

After the adventurers have agreed to help LeClair, he will successfully bribe the merchant captain to record his as killed in the attack, after which his body was accidentally jettisoned into space during the confusion. He hopes to throw the pirates off his tail, and avoid placing the adventuring group in possible danger of revenge.

The shadowing corsair has now manuvered out of sensor range. LeClair will want to refuel and leave the system as soon as possible. If there is cargo to unload or sell, that is acceptable to him if it is done quickly, but he will vehemently oppose attempting to acquire other cargo to take on before beginning the jump to the next system.

**Lt Cdr Victor LeClair**
585A87 Age 34 4 terms
Cr edits (Warrant)

Navigation-2, Handgun-2, Ship's Boat-1, Communications-1, Computer-1, Forward Obs-1, Liaison-1, Brawling-1, Bribery-1, Intrustion-1, Grav Vehicle-0, Laser Weapons-0, Vac Suit-0

Starport: B, Medium, Thin, Wet World, Mod Pop, Low Law, Avg Stellar

**Lying In Wait**

When the adventurers arrive at the next system, they will find a pirate vessel waiting for them. The pirates determined where LeClair was likely going and beat him to he jump (figuring he would be on the adventurer's vessel). They will recognize the adventurers' ship by its transponder signal and attack.

If the PC's ship is roughly an even match for the corsair, then it will be the vessel that attacks (with its previous damage repaired for the most part). If the players' vessel is larger or more heavily armed, the GM should choose a pirate vessel more appropriate (this is the 2nd vessel that was in the system this scenario began in).

After this ship-to-ship combat is finished, the group can continue on to the Imperial base (assuming the PC's are victorious and their vessel is spaceworthy). LeClair will pay for any and all damages to the group's ship and, upon arrival at the base, will arrange for a monetary reward (amount determined by the GM).

About four or five weeks later, the PC's will see or hear a media report stating that naval elements staged coordinated attacks on 3 separate, confirmed pirate outposts in the subsector. The navy has not released further details or the number of vessels destroyed or captured.

The PC's will likely consider the possibility that some ships escaped and may worry about acts of revenge aimed at them.

**Referee's Notes**

If the PC's do not have their own ship, the group can be passengers or crew on a commercial vessel that answers the distress signal at the beginning of this scenario. After LeClair obtains passage on he same vessel the PC's are on, he can hire them as bodyguards to escort him to the nearest Imperial base. In the next system, the PC's can actually be involved in the ensuing combat if they have to help rebel armed boarders trying to capture LeClair.

# A Fistful Of Laughs!

By Aaron Fichtelberg

A Fistful Of Laughs is a short adventure for ***Steve Jackson Games'*** popular RPG **Toon.**

### The Cast Of Characters

The animator and up to 4 players, the players may bring anyone they want in this adventure and the plsauers can either work together, separate, or against each other.

The animator plays the roles of the town's populus, Grey Guss and his gang, the sheriff, the grizzly bear, and anyone else who comes into the story asides from the players.

### The Location

The adventure takes place in Drygulch, a small old-western town a few miles out of Anytown. The town has everything a typical western town has (i.e. a saloon, barber shop, a pony express office, a sheriff's office that has been riddled with bullets many times, etc.). Before Grey Guss came to town, Drygulch was peaceful, but ever since Grey Guss came, the entire town has been in total panic. Drygulch is completely surrounded by hills and desert with the exception of the Horseshoe gold mine, which was abandoned a long time ago. SECRET: The mine is now the home of huge grizzly bear.

### The Situation

Drygulch has been recently terrorized by the notorious Grey Guss and his gang of thieves and nobody's able to stop them. The entire town's chicken, including the sheriff. When thePC's arrive on the scene, Gray Guss is about to rob the Last National Bank for the 23rd time.

### The Plot

The players arrive at Drygulch by any means the animator can think up ("I knew I should've taken that left turn at Albequerque"). When they arrive, they will see the entire town is in an uproar, people are running everywhere, picking up children, locking up their homes, etc. If one of the characters asks a person what's going on, the panicky citizen will quickly answer "Grey Guss is a comin' to shoot up the town, the sheriff, and the bank! You'd better git to safety 'fore he gits here!"

At that instant, the entire town will be closed up with nobody, aside from the PC's, outside. The PC's have 3 turns til Grey Guss arrives and from now on they must make a Break Down Door roll to enter any building (Including the outhouse!).

### The Sheriff's Office

If any character goes to the sheriff's office, they 'll see that the doors and windows are all tightly locked. (thus, the PC's must make a Break Down Door roll to enter here also) When (or if) the PC's enter the sheriff's office they'll see nothing, but they'll hear whimpering coming from a corner of the room. In that corner they'll see the sheriff curled up in a ball and shaking like a leaf. He's scared silly of Grey Guss and won't leave his current position without a Fast-Talk roll.

If any of the PC's come anywhere near the sheriff, he'll immediately take off his badge and pin it on one of the PC's(if that PC doesn't wear clothing, he'll take 1 die of damage from the pin) saying, "I quit!, here, you're the new sheriff, congratulations!". Then the sheriff will shake that PC's hand profusly and run away, laughing hysterically. If anyone tries to remove the pin, they'll find out that the pin won't budge, and only a PC with incredible strength could remove it.

### The Arrival Of Grey Guss

After the 3 turns are up or a PC gets pinned with the sheriff's badge, Grey Guss arrives with his 6 member gang. If any PC's are outside, the gang will immediately open fire on them. After knocking down the PC(s) outside, the gang will go the sheriff's office and challenge the sheriff to come outside and shoot it out with him. If he comes out, the gang will mow the sheriff down. If nobody comes out, they'll open fire upon the sheriff's office (which has 8 hit points).

### The Bank Robbery

As soon as Grey Guss and his gang have succeed in shooting up the sheriff's office, they'll head over to the Last National Bank and rob it. When the robbery starts, Grey Guss will enter the bank disguised as an old lady (That is, if he makes his disguise roll. If he doesn't, he'll have forgotten to take off his hat!) and will waddle up to the cashier (he actually walks, but his legs are so short that it looks like he's waddling), ask the cashier if he can make a withdrawal, then he'll pull his gun out of his purse and at that moment his entire gang will rush through the door (horses and all). If none of the characters are in the bank at the time of the robbery, the gang will get away with the money without any trouble (the bank

owners don't want the money THAT much). If they are prevented from robbing the bank, the gang will keep trying, although their methods will be different and progressively sillier each time they try until the animator feels that it's no longer funny and is getting tiresome.

**Grey Guss' Hideout**

After robbing the bank, the gang will head to their secret hideout outside of Drygulch. The hideout is so secret that Grey Guss' gang couldn't find it! To solve this problem, Grey Guss puts up signs telling them where the hideout is. The signs are spaced about 300 yards apart, the signs go something like this: "This way to Gray Guss' secret headquarters, these headquarters are secret, so if your not a member of Grey Guss' gang, get out of here!". But if the character(s) fail their read roll, they'll misread the arrows on the sign and the arrows will lead to the Horseshoe gold mine and right up to the bed of the grizzly bear!

The real hideout consists of little more than a few tents scattered around a firepit at the base of a rocky hill. SECRET: If the PC's haven't met the grizzly at the Horseshoe gold mine, they won't know that on the other side of the rocky hill is the mine! If the characters approach the camp, they'll see Grey Guss sitting around the fire counting his spoils of the robbery (if any) with his staring greedily at the piles of money. If the gang failed in it's attempt to rob the bank, they'll all be sitting around the fire feeling glum and Grey Guss will be blaming their failure on the gang's "incompetance" (kind of like a 3ft. tall Doctor Doom would). Have the gang as a whole make a See/Hear/Smell roll. If they make it, they detect the PC's and clumsily run around the camp looking for their guns for the next turn.

Allow the rest of this portion to go along as the PC's act using your best judgement to keep it running smoothly and funny. Do anything you can as an animator to prevent this from becoming a plain shootout (i.e. an Indian raid, an avalanche, a flash flood or anything silly).

**The Big Finish**

If the gang loses, or the battle has gone on for over 10 turns, all the noise has awaken the bear, who walks over and proceeds to teach these noise makers a lesson.

After the PC's are finished fighting the bear, or lose to the bear, the ex-sheriff walks into the camp and places Grey Guss' gang, and the grizzly bear under arrest (they are all too amazed at the sheriffs sudden rise in Chutzpah, which is now 9, to do anything) and proceeds to take all the credit for the situation, including the $1,000 reward money for the arrest of Grey Guss and his gang. Oh well, ya can't win 'em all.

**Plot Points**

Any player who makes Grey Guss fall down gets a plot point, and any player who makes a member of Grey Guss' gang fall down gets a half plot point. If the gang robs the bank, each player loses a plot point. Any player who makes the grizzly fall down gets a plot point.

**Name:** Grey Guss
**Species:** Human
**Natural Enemies:** Anyone, especially sheriffs and small towns.
**Beliefs & Goals:** Get rich and have fun by shooting up places.
**Hit Points:** 11

| Attribute | Skill | Lvl |
|---|---|---|
| Muscle: 4 | Break Down Door | 4 |
| | Climb | 4 |
| | Fight | 7 |
| | Pick Up Hvy ThingThrow | 4 |
| Zip: 4 | Dodge | 7 |
| | Drive Vehicle | 4 |
| | Fire Gun | 8 |
| | Jump | 7 |
| | Ride | 4 |
| | Run | 4 |
| | Swim | 4 |
| Smarts: 3 | Hide/Spot Hidden | 5 |
| | Identify Dangerous Thing | 3 |
| | Read | 3 |
| | Resist Fast Ta lk | 3 |
| | See/Hear/Smell | 4 |
| | Set/Disarm Trap | 3 |
| | Track/Cover Tracks | 4 |
| Chutzbah: 5 | Fast Talk | 7 |
| | Pass/Detect Shoddy Goods | 5 |
| | Sleight Of Hand | 5 |
| | Sneak | 7 |

**Possessions:**
1. Big Gun (Does 1D6 + 2)
2. 12 1/2 gallon hat
3. Disguise kit

**Description:**
Grey Guss is a 3ft. tall cowboy who always wear a hat that's as big as he is. He has the personality of a spoiled brat and anything he can't get, he takes.

**Shticks:**
Disguise 3

**Name:** Grey Guss' gang members
**Species:** Human
**Natural Enemies:** The Law
**Beliefs & Goals:** Listen to Grey Guss, Grey Guss is your friend. Would your friend lie to you? Get rich by being Grey Guss' friend.
**Hit Points:** 8

| Attribute | Skill | Lvl |
|---|---|---|
| Muscle: 4 | Break Down Door | 4 |
| | Climb | 4 |
| | Fight | 7 |
| | Pick Up Heavy Thing | 4 |
| | Throw | 7 |
| Zip: 4 | Dodge | 4 |
| | Drive Vehicle | 4 |
| | Fire Gun | 8 |
| | Jump | 4 |
| | Ride | 8 |
| | Run | 4 |
| | Swim | 4 |
| Smarts: 2 | Hide/Spot Hidden | 5 |
| | Idenify Dangerous Thing | 2 |
| | Read | 2 |
| | Resist Fast Talk | 5 |
| | See/Hear/Smell | 5 |
| | Set/Disarm Trap | 2 |
| | Track/Cover Tracks | 2 |
| Chutzbah: 3 | Fast Talk | 5 |
| | Pass/Detect Shoddy Goods | 3 |
| | Sleight Of Hand | 3 |
| | Sneak | 8 |

**Possessions:**
1. Big Gun (Does 1D6 + 2)

**Description:**
These cowboys range anywhere from 4ft. to 6ft. tall. They all are very greedy and will do anything Grey Guss (or anyone) says so long as they're promised a share of the cut.

**Name:** The big grizzly bear
**Species:** Grizzly bear
**Natural Enemies:** Anyone who disturbs his rest.
**Beliefs & Goals:** Stomp anyone who annoys him or enters his home (The Horseshoe mine).
**Hit Points:** 12

| Attribute | Skill | Lvl |
|---|---|---|
| Muscle: 6 | Break Down Door | 6 |
| | Climb | 6 |
| | Fight | 9 |
| | Pick Up Heavy Thing | 6 |
| | Throw | 7 |
| Zip: 2 | Dodge | 2 |
| | Drive Vehicle | NA |
| | Fire Gun | NA |
| | Jump | 2 |
| | Ride | NA |
| | Run | 4 |
| | Swim | 2 |
| Smarts: 2 | Hide/Spot Hidden | 2 |
| | Identify Dangerous Thing | 2 |
| | Read | NA |
| | Resist Fast Talk | NA |
| | Set/Disarm Trap | NA |
| | Track/Cover Tracks | 4 |
| Chutzbah: 4 | Fast Talk | NA |
| | Pass/Detect Shoddy Good | 7 |
| | Sleight Of Hand | NA |
| | Sneak | 9 |

**Description:**
A 10ft. tall grizzly with claws that do 1D6 + 1 damage.

**Shticks:**
Incredible Strength 5

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# The Mechwarrior Aliens

**By Barry Osser**

I have noticed a trend beginning in my **Mechwarrior** campaign: Every player wanted his character to be different, so each character had its own distinguishing scar. This obviously, began to get out of hand after awhile; there are only so many places for scars and so many shapes they can be in. And then, how do you explain the attack that left you with a scar in the shape of the Star of David on 3/4 of your body? So I decided to change things, to give my players a chance to be all different. I mean really different. I added aliens to my campaign, and the players took to them like moths to a flame.

A question that is raised is how will aliens fit into the universe and how will they affect it. If you assume the map in the **Mechwarrior** rules to be accurate, the distance from Sol to the Periphery is between 210 and 800 light years (LY) distance. The Periphery itself is very vaguely defined to be at the outer fringe of the map. So, what I did was to place uncharted or "Alien Space" 600 LY beyond the map edge. This meant that any alien was at least 20 jumps (a maximum single jump in **Mechwarrior**, remember, is 30 LY) from his homeworld, or between 40 days and 6 years from anything but canned food and recirculated air on his jumpship transport. This kept them from becoming an immediate force to be reckoned with.

Next, I assumed that few aliens come into the **Mechwarrior** section of the cosmos. Few will come because the level of destruction going on in human space is too dangerous, but those that brave it and survive will be a vital asset to any house that grabs them; especially an alien with tech skills like technician and engineering in the four or greater skill level range. What would be the value of a technician level five person who knew how to build what he was fixing, not just exchange spare parts? Answer: More than a elite mech fighting squad, or possibly even a palace guard's worth. With aliens you can do this, and few players are upset by the fact that this makes their characters more playable and valuable in the game. Another thing aliens allow is to get rid of the declining technology motif in **Mechwarrior.**

I constatly ran into problems with the fact that Comstar was no longer processing items of technology: So more and more irreplaceable stuff was destroyed in the mech-universe, faster and faster the outcome of the war was going to be decided by who stockpiled the most. If you have concerted attacks in your game against the few mech building planets and those facilities are destroyed (as they were in my game), there are only a limited number of mechs left in the universe. Attrition rates build up fast and soon, if you follow a logical pattern, **Mechwarrior** becomes a game of fist to fist combat between Mechwarriors in and amongst the old deteriorating husks of mechs. With aliens, you can beat this if they bring in a revitalization to the technology. So how do you go about creating aliens?

Well, I took the academies in **Mechwarrior** as my starting point. Make the alien race a package that can be purchased. Give it some specialties, a few problems, and give it a value so that players will really have to decide whether or not they want to play an alien or not. A simple set of steps to follow is given below.

1) What does the alien look like?
2) What does the alien live on: Can it survive on human worlds, eating human food, or does it need something special?
3) What specialties and disadvantages does the alien race possess?
4) Make the alien a fair and balanced value.

What the alien looks like is at least as important as what specialties it has. If you make an alien look stupid, you seldom will get any takers of that race. Conversely, if you make it so frightening that troops run from it upon first sighting the alien, then it has advantages that may make it overbalanced for you game. When I designed my aliens, I tired to stick with characters that weren't **E.T.** and weren't like **Alien.** They were somewhere in the middle.

What the alien lives on is also very important. You can assume that all aliens live on human diets and in human hospitable atmospheres to make it easy, but there is a lot of enjoyment to be gained from aliens that need something special. They might need special breathing contraptions that allow them to breath a special mixture of gases or they might be light sensitive. What if humans turned out to be the alien's favorite food. Spend some time designing this part because this will limit your alien races the most in game play and may also be its most enjoyable attribute.

What specialties and disadvantages does the race possess? Are they armor plated giving them tough skin, or do they maybe have raised or lowered multipliers to HTK's. It is quite possible that the race as a whole has glass jaw or a specific natural aptitude (like medical/first aid or in brawling). Consider all your choices fully: Is this too much, too little, or just right? If it turns out to be just be right, you probably have a alien people will want to play.

Now comes your final task in designing an alien race: Making the race a fair value. What I did is to make an alien race as a package deal. I would add up their advantages and disadvantages (and remember that alien looks and how they live should be considered into this), total the CP value, then reduce it by 20% to 40%. The final total was how much it cost to be that race. I also did one more thing to try and keep the aliens in line. I

made minimum stats to become the specific race.

It seem silly to me to be part of an alien race with a natural aptitude in technician and allow characters to begin with a LRN of three so they could use the extra points to get an outrageous technician score. It again threw game balance off. So you might consider giving minimum stats so that aliens stay within bounds.

Belw are three of the races I have found to be very enjoyable in my campaign. They each contain a brief description, minimum stats, alien abilities, and their approximate distance out from Sol.

**Gecko** (CP cost-35)

Minimum Stats

Body: 7
Dex: 9
LRN: 8
Cha: 2

Alien Abilities: Cannot purchase family feud

Tough Skin: Body rating for damage is 1 higher than normal

Ambidextrous/Both

Natural Aptitude: Gunnery/Mech

Distance from Sol: 2400 LY

The Geckos are a proud race of warriors whose mech use predates humans by 2000 years. However, their mech level remains close to the human standard because it became more enjoyable to fight them than to research how to make their mechs more efficient. Geckos are scaly humanoids possessing a powerful tail (can be used in place of a fist in combat) and abnormally large (for humans) ears. Their eyes are somewhat light sensitive, giving them a -1 to hit outside of a mech in daylight without eye protection like sunglasses.

**Vegan** (CP cost-25)

Minimum Stats

Body: 4
Dex: 8
LRN: 8
Cha: 5

Alien Abilities: Cannot purchase natural aptitude

Natural Aptitude: Athletics, and Technician or Engineering

Lowered HTK multiplier of 9 and Brawl at one level higher than they possess

Distance from Sol: 1400 LY

The closest aliens to human space in distance, the Vegans have had dealings with portions of the Periphery for many years. They walk upright, stand about five feet, and have manipulative paws. In other respects they look like common house cats with fur color running the full range from Calico to Siamese to Tabby. They have a dislike for water, have no social problems with licking/grooming themselves in public, and prefer meat as sustenance (although they can subsist on vegetable matter and vitamin supplements if need be).

**Briata** (CP cost-20)

Minimum Stats

Body: 6
Dex: 4
LRN: 6
Cha: No min.

Alien Abilities: Natural aptitude in Medical/First Aid and Technician

Body armor which raises effective Body score by 3 for damage

Claws do twice normal damage in a brawl

Distance from Sol: 4200 LY

The Briata are a very strange race that most closely resemble crabs. The are massive by human standards, measuring up to eight feet high with claws up to two feet across. They cannot live for long in human atmospheres and must wear a special suit when in such atmospheres. If the suit is punctured and not fixed in time, the Briata with asphyxiate. The Briata are constantly eating, but with some differences to the human style. The Briata shove food in their mouth and enzymes break it down. What's useable to the body is absorbed and a paste is left. Consequently, the Briata are always putting food into their mouths and pulling paste out. This becomes nausceous to humans very quickly. Briata cannot use human tools except with cyberenetic hands. These devices convert brain impluses to movements in the hand. They have mastered the use of the cybernetic hand to where they can do finer work than humans with a greater skill.

# Just When You Thought It Was Safe To Go Back In The Water...

**By William Goodson**

*The crystal clear water seemed to magnify the tropical sun. The incredible bright colors of the living reef held James Bond mesmerized for a moment.*

*The beauty he knew was real, but so were the few simple but very dangers that lived in the reef.*

*The two junior agents, less experienced with scuba gear, were counting on him to lead them through safely. Their mission on the tiny island ahead could not wait. He propelled himself forward with strong strokes of his fins.*

Did you know that over a fourth of the **Bond** films have included long underwater segments? According to **Bond's** official biographer, Ian Fleming, 007 has spent many hours scuba diving and snorkling in the tropics for sheer pleasure.

Therefore, it is only appropriate that ***Victory Games's*** **The World Of James Bond** system has rules for underwater travel and combat.

Some of the dangers in an underwater adventure, such as hostile divers and sharks, are obvious. I want to suggest some less well known obstacles a GM may use to design a journey through a coral reef in the **James Bond** system.

For combat purposes, a moray may be considered to have damage class F for its powerful bite. Its speed in only for swimming since it is helpless out of water. Its strength is low because it cannot carry a load of any kind. Its dexterity is high because it is hard to wrestle with.

Morays are commonly considered blood thirsty man-eaters, but this is not completely correct.

**Moray**
Str: 3
Dex: 15
Will: 5
Per: 15
Int: NA
Hand to Hand Combat
Primary Chance - 15
Hand to Hand Damage
Class - F
Speed - 3
Evasion Primary
Chance - 30

They do not possess poison fangs, nor, as it sometimes rumored, do they wrap themselves around divers and crush them to death. They do, however, have powerful jaws, well able to break or cut human bone

Morays are commonly called moray eels, and they do look like eels, but they are actually sea dwellers of the Maraenidae family. True eels hatch in the ocean and then swim up fresh rivers where they stay most of their lives.

Most moray are found in tropical areas and take up residence in holes around reefs and rocky areas. They attack by lunging from their dens and seizing their prey. They seldom hunt over wide areas.

Experiments with blinded moray show they attack when alerted by a sense similar to scent. Morays will also poke their way into crevices for small animals, especially octopi, and eat carrion.

Nearly all moray attacks on humans occur when a diver probes their lair on disturbs the opening. Scuba divers are often attacked when they probe in holes with spears looking for octopi. One possible way to involve a diver with a moray is to have someone hide an object of value in a moray's hole.

Only a few unprovoked attacks have been ever recorded.

Defensively, moray skin is scaleless and covered with a slime, making it almost impossible for a human hand to hold. Their bodies are so flexible they can actually tie themselves in knots, making them very difficult to wrestle. Passing their heads through such a knot helps them dislodge octopi, which attach themselves over a moray's face while being attacked.

When speared, moray can take many hours to die. In fact, they are able to work their way up a spear in a frenzy to reach their attacker.

There are several species of moray, the Green Moray (Gymnothorn Funebris) of the Caribbean and the Brown Moray (Enchelynassa Canino) of the Pacific are the largest. Mature specimens grow to between six to eight feet long and weight between seventy-five to one hundred pounds.

## Jellyfish

The most famous of the small drifting creatures that one needs to avoid in the ocean is the Portugese Man-of-War (Physalia). It is not a true jellyfish, but a member of the same phylam, Cnidarice. This is a phylam of invertebrates that all have specialized stinging cells.

The man-of-war is a wide ranging creature found in both and South Atlantic and Pacific. A very complex and yet delicate creature, it is not one animal, but a colony of several of several polyps, very simple animals.

One polyp is an air bladder which acts as a float. Attached to

the underside is a set of polyps which digest food and transfer nourishment to the other parts.

Under this body trail hundreds of tentacles averaging four to six feet long. These are designed to sting fish and draw them up to the polyps which digest. Each tentacle has several hundred specialized stinging cells containing nematocysts, small capsules with coiled tubes in them. When the tentacles touch an animal which gives off the right chemical signal the nematocysts fire their coils which plug into the prey and pump venom in.

The Portugese Man-of-War can drive one of its tubes through a surgical glove. Its venom causes a painful burning sensation and swelling. Serious injury is unusual unless the victim is allergic.

Interestingly, several kinds of fish are able to swim safely among the tentacles. For some reason they fail to trigger the nematocysts. It is unfortunate that human beings do.

The true jellyfish is a single animal. Where the man-of-war is blown around the ocean's surface with very little control, jellyfish can swim, slowly, and both sink and rise in the water.

Possibly the most dangerous creature in the ocean is the Sea Wasp or Box Jelly (Cheronese Fleckeri). Since 1884, this jellyfish has sixty people of North Australia.

Using several different types of venom at once, the box jelly can kill can kill an adult in less than three minutes. It is impossible to guess how people have drowned after being stunned by one of these.

For game purposes, jellyfish of all types may be treated as an obstacle rather then an attacking animal and do not need statistics aside from a damage class.

The GM can place them in any ocean to spice up a swim or scuba dive. The odds of spotting them are rolled on a character's perception score. The chance of avoiding them can be rolled on either the character's dexterity or, if they have it, their diving skill. Modifiers include murky or clear water, and strong currents.

The table below gives the range and damage class of some kinds of jellyfish.

| Name<br>Range | Damage Class |
|---|---|
| **Box Jelly**<br>**(Chironex Fleckeria)**<br>Indian Ocean, Coral Sea, and Australia | J |
| **Big Blueplate Jelly**<br>**(Aganea Capillata)**<br>Northern Atlantic | A |
| **Portugese Man-of-War**<br>**(Physalia Physatis)**<br>Southern Atlantic and Pacific | A |
| **Sea Nettle**<br>**(Dactylometrc Pacificsu)**<br>Pacific and Atlantic | B |

## Sea Urchins

Sea urchins look like plants, but they are actually small, ball shaped animals. They normally crawl around reefs and sheltered areas where can find protection from strong currents.

Most urchins have spines and on a few species these are sharp and brittle and able to penetrate human skin. These will break off in a wound, increasing the chance of infection.

The Black Sea Urchin is found in most of the world's oceans. Its spines are filled with a venom which produces a burning pain and swelling.

An urchin's spines are purely defensive since the animal simply clings to shelter with them pointed outward. A diver must step on or brush against an urchin to be stuck.

Most sea urchins should be considered damage class A, but the Black Sea Urchin is able to cause damage class B.

## Barnacles

Barnacles grow on all sorts of objects underwater, including piers and ship hulls. A diver brushing against their hard sharp shells can receive jagged cuts. These easily become infected.

The odds of striking a barnacle encrusted object may be judged by the character's dexterity, or if the character has it, their diving skill.

## Coral

Coral reefs consist of several types of tiny animals, polyps, which cluster together in death. Their tiny lime skeletons form coral reefs. Coral reefs grow in shallow water almost anywhere in the ocean where temperatures are over 70 degrees.

## Stinging Coral

A few types of coral can sting. The most common is the Elkhorne Coral (Acropapa palmota), which is not true coral at all. Resembling the antlers of an elk, the branches are covered with fine hairs which act as tiny stinging spines. These spines can cause intense burning sensations and swelling. Touching an elkhorne coral always causes A class damage to exposed skin.

*The British agents quietly waded ashore and made for the shelter of the brush. Bond opened the first aid kit on his belt as they hid themselves.*

*They had avoided the guard boats, and no sharks had appeared. Then, in a moment of carelessnesss, Agent Brevers had brushed his bare arms against some stinging coral.*

*Now, thought Bond angrily, they would have to lose time treating the painful rash. Worse, Brevers would lose some use of his gun hand.*

*It was not a disaster, but this mission was off to a bad start.*

# Project File: Discovery

## A mini-adventure for THE MORROW PROJECT

by Joseph Benedetto, Jr.

McWilliams was the first on his feet, stepping slowly from the hibernation tube that had been his home for untold years. The bright glare of the bolt hole lights made his eyes water; he glanced around the small concrete room. They were alone. He turned to the computer that monitored them all this time: Red lights.

"Hey John!" It was Lynn, their communications specialist. "Where is everybody?"

"Red Light on the radio link. Guess Prime Base felt we should be awake." He wiped his eyes and sighed. "Back-up plans must be in effect. I don't even want to think why." He then noticed the pile of crates stacked in the far corner of the room. "What the hell is all that stuff?"

"it's got our code stencilled on it: 'FW-11(S)'. Must be for us." Lynn tried to move one of the boxes and then saw the heavy electrical cable running out of it, right over to the bolt hole computer. "Sweet Momma, what is this stuff for?" She looked around and found a packet on the top of a large plastic drum. "Maybe this is the manifest." She tossed it to McWilliams. "You should get a kick out of this. I'm going to call Prime Base and find out what the emergency is."

It took McWilliams, with the help of Powers and Jones, 10 minutes to locate each crate on the list, they had been packed too tightly into the underground bunker. The rest of the team had fitted up their packs by the time Jones found the last item, an AN/PRC-70 backpack radio.

"Probably be useless," Lynn said as she stepped over from the computer. "Prime Base isn't responding, despite having sent the recall code." She shoved a piece of paper at them. "Code designation matches for Prime Base. But I can't raise them. *Or* U.S. Gov., *or* any civilian operators, HAM sets, or anything." She bit her lower lip nervously. "I don't like this, John."

"Yeah...well, we can't stay buried forever." He opened the #1 locker and broke out the escape tools, tossing a shovel to Powers and another to Peterson, the RTO with the MARS patch. "Primary Exit Hatch. Let's do it."

**PROJECT FILE: DISCOVERY** is a mini-adventure for a six-man team; MP Unit FW-11(S); who are just awakening to a world not of their making.

During the early years of the Project, some of the designers on the Council of Tomorrow foresaw one problem the Project would have to face: People have a tendency to die. MP teams in the field might not be able to cross hundreds of miles of harsh terrain to reach a permanent depot/base to get replacements for their decimated ranks.

The FW, or "Frozen Watch," Teams were designed to fulfill that need: Small, lightly equipped groups scattered around the country, who would wait out The War and the main awakenings; sleeping on until MP teams who needed replacements came along and revived them. Special volunteers were recruited from all ranks and branches of the Project and placed in FW Teams, their diversity ensuring a higher probability of fulfilling just about *any* teams needs. They came from RECON, MARS, Science, Service & Support: At least one member of each team was a Medic, but after that anything was good.

Due to their nature, the FW Teams were designed to operate *light*. It was assumed that another, already-awake team would call the FW Team up, and thus equip them with such items as weaponry, vehicles, etc. The FW Teams are all equipped with Basic Packs, but are not given any weapons; neither do they have their own resupply caches. All members of the team are aware of these facts.

As a last-ditch contingency plan, it is possible for the FW Teams to be awakened by a remote radio signal from Prime Base; normally, a team would just arrive on site and dig them up. To cover the contingency plan, emergency weapons are provided for the team (in locker #3) in the bolt hole.

### THE BOLT HOLE

The players are in a much smaller version of the standard storage and freezing facility used by the MP. This one contains the team's freeze tubes and equipment lockers. Because it was expected that the team would remain in hibernation until another team dug them up, there is no periscope package in the FW hole.

There are only two exits: A personnel exit normally used for egress, and a back up emergency exit cofferdammed with sand to make it extremely hard to collapse or destroy. Both are designed to be blastproof and hard to detect by casual outside observation. The emergency exit must be cleared of sand before it can be used; the tools to do this are in Locker #1. Both exits rise vertically to within about 3 or more feet of the surface; this earth cover must be removed before breaking into the open air. Again, all members of the team are aware of these facts.

## NORMAL PROCEDURES

*Normally*, the FW teams would lie dormant until an awake team needed personnel; this team would look through their AutoNav computer until they found a file noting the location of an "abandoned ash pit;" this was the cover story for the hidden replacement teams. Morrow Industries' engineers actually put a fake ash pit, filled the waste slurry, at the the spot to mark it. The needy team would arrive, locate the entrance, and dig up the sleeping team. As can be seen in this scenario, this does not always happen as planned.

As far as orders go, the FW teams have none. In emergencies, they have to fall back on the MP Standard General Orders:

**1. Do *everything* possible to help the people.**

**2. Regroup with the rest of the Project & contact Prime Base.**

**3. Try to stay alive.**

It is important to note that the personal safety of the team comes THIRD on the list of concerns for the PC's! The PD may wish to note this to the players when they starting out.

## WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW WON'T HURT THEM

Frozen Watch Team FW-11(S) was frozen on 26 August 1987. They have no knowledge of the local area, nor of the location of any other MP team or facility. Their assigned mission is to wait in hibernation until another team arrives and calls them up. They have no equipment or supplies other than their Basic Packs and what equipment they can scavenge from the lockers in their bolt hole. They have no supply caches. The team members all trained together and are familiar with each other and all standard MP equipment.

Their bolt hole (so the team surmises) is simply a buried concrete box designed to shelter them during hibernation; they are supposed to abandon it after coming out of cold sleep.

In truth, this is not the case with Team FW-11(S). One of the members of the Council of Tomorrow though that the Project should provide for certain emergencies, and push for the construction of Emergency Shelters in remote areas of the country - each shelter being a simple concrete shed with a basement, and beneath that a small MP cache of emergency supplies (tools, food, water, and power). A small number of these shelters were actually built before the War broke out. In the case of Team FW-11(S), however, they went a step further: They decided at the last moment that it would be a better idea to place a FW Team in the space beneath the basement of a shelter, so that a team looking for them would find not only the FW Team but also a shelter as well. This combination of FW Team & Shelter was not standard; more like an experiment undertaken during construction (hence the "(S)" or Special designation in the team's code assignment).

Basically, there is the team's bolt hole; above that is the shed basement, then the shed itself. (See FLOORPLANS #1 and #2 for layout details.) Since this was a last minute idea, the gear for the shelter cache was simply crammed into the bolt hole with the players! It was decided to fill in the basement to disguise the entrance to the bolt hole; in practice, it is assumed that the team will remove all of the dirt and use the area *as a basement*, with the bolt hole beneath it becoming a *sub-basement*.

## THE PLOT

When the players finally go up the Personnel Exit and break through into the air, they will actually be in the 3' high "crawlspace" under the floor of the shed. It is pitch black, cold (45 degrees), and very windly. It *sounds* as if there is a thunderstorm nearby, but nothing can be seen. (The PD should play this strangeness up until the players either stand up or turn on a flashlight!) Also, they will hear some people moving about overhead - plus loud shouts, drunken cries, and the occasional scream of terror. If the team is even halfway bright, they will realize that something is going down upstairs, and it is not good.

Looking around the crawlspace with a flashlight will show few details: There are a few vent holes in the wall letting in the wind; there is only one exit from this place, and it seems to be s steel manhole cover opening right into the noise going on overhead. In the off chance that anyone wants to dig around the crawlspace, they will waste lots of time and effort to discover the following facts: The crawlspace is actually a basement under the shed, and it has (had) a 7' ceiling, meaning that there is a layer of dirt here 4' thick...around 3000 cubic feet of dirt, and there is no real place to put it.

A better choice might be to retreat and try the emergency exit, although removing all that sand will take some time. However, the emergency exit comes up *outside* the shelter and can be useful in planning an attack (see FLOORPLAN #2 for details on location). Of course, teams are likely to try almost anything before thinking of the logical approach; it seems to be a hallmark of many players.

Attempts to *quietly* lift the manhole cover and peek around are best determined by the PD and how the players act.

## THE ACTION

The shed has been temporarily occupied by Badges (see the MPGB, p. 50). They jumped a passing wagon earlier today and are busy enjoying the spoils they have captured, which include and women. 2 hours of the Badges' "attention" have left the 4 women captives in very bad shape. The Badges, having tired of them, are busy torturing their 'guests'. These people *definitely* need the intervention of the players.

As can be seen from the floorplans, the shed has one large doorway (to admit MP vehicles like the V-150) and 2 small windows, as well as a loft. 2 of the women are on the main floor, 1 is under the loft (near the doorway) and the last is in the loft. All are bound and have at least 1 Badge with them. There are a total of 9 Badges here, scattered around the shed; 1 is actually on the roof during the rainstorm. She wasn't having any fun, so they sent her to the roof to keep watch. This not too bad, since there is another band of Badges in the area, and they are expected to be by sometime during the night.

The window shutters and steel doors to the shelter rusted away years ago; the wind is blowing on in, and the crash of thunder and the darkness makes it easy for the players to figure a way to make their rescue. In this kind of weather, a successful MOVE SILENTLY roll can do wonders!

All of the Badges have weapons, although only 1 or 2 have their rifles/shotguns close at hand; the others are likely (65%) to have a pistol or revolver on them at all times. The girl on the roof has a shotgun with slug rounds, as well as a S&W M29. None of the Badges has any form of Body Armor.

The obvious matter is for the players to figure a way out of their bolt hole, and then figure out a plan to rescue the hostages; this may be difficult for a team bottlenecked beneath the manhole cover. And assuming they pull this off successfully, they will have to deal with the immediate situation of the hostages they have freed: They need medical attention and shelter; it's 45 degrees inside *and* out, in the middle of a storm, and there is no telling if there are more of these Badge scum out there in the forest somewhere. Trying to make a stand in a concrete box in the middle of a dark and stormy night with wounded civilians who are in no shape to move is not exactly a great tactical exercise, although the players are about to try it one for size.

## FROZEN WATCH BASIC LOAD (INDIVIDUAL) STANDARD ISSUE Wt. 18.69kg

1 pr Coveralls (AC = 7)
1 pr Boots (AC = 4)
1 Green Beret
1 Pocket Knife w/2 blades, can & bottle opener and screwdriver
1 M1 CBR kit w/6 gas antidote loads
1 AN/PRC-68 Personal Communicator w/scrambler
1 Medkit
1 KCB-70 Knife/Bayonet
1 M17A1 Protective Mask
1 Morrow Project ID Card

1 Basic Pack containing:
- 1 1 Liter canteen w/cup
- 1 5 Liter folding canteen
- 3 Boxes matches (50 per box)
- 1 Generator Flashlight
- 1 Weapons cleaning kit
- 1 pr Coveralls (AC = 7)
- 1 Mess Kit
- 1 Compass
- 1 Toilet Kit
- 1 Waterproof poncho
- 1 Sleeping bag
- 2 Sets underwear
- 50m Nylon cord (50 kilogram breaking strength)
- 1 Web belt w/ammunition pouches and holster
- 14 Days rations

The Basic load is an issue of equipment that is common to all MP personnel. This equipment is stored in a locker that is part of the individual's freeze tube and is assigned to the particular person.

## BOLT HOLE STANDARD EQUIPMENT

This bolt hole is not equipped with either a periscope or a CBR detector package. However, there are three equipment lockers mounted on the walls:

**Locker #1**
(Escape Tools)

4 Shovels, Folding
1 Axe, Two-handed
2 Picks
2 Crowbars

**Locker #2**
(Emergency Supplies)

1 Ration Pack
(feeds 6 people for 10 days)
1 Large Medkit
1 HP-35 Pistol w/3 loaded magazines

**Locker #3**
(Emergency Weapons)

2 M16A2 Rifles, each w/2 loaded magazines
2 HP-35 Pistols, each w/3 loaded magazines
1 CP-7 Binoculars/Laser Rangefinder

**Mounted on wall**
(near antenna contact point)
1 AN/PRC-70 Backpack Communicator with scrambler

The PC's can operate all of this equipment without too much difficulty.

## THE CRATES

All of the following items are packed in crates crammed into one corner of the bolt hole; the manifest the players discover is shown to the right:

Although all of the gear is marked and is MP standard issue, none of the team members knows why it is here in the hole with them! All of the gear is in perfect working order, although (with the exception of the Fusion Pack, wired to the bolt hole computer) none if the gear is activated, and none of the electrical gear's batteries are charged.

### MANIFEST

1 Fusion Pack (activated when team wakes up)
1 Drug Kit
1 Surgical Kit
4 Medkits
2 CP-7 Binocular/Range finders
1 AN/PRC-70 Backpack Communicator
3 AN/PRC-68 Personal Communicators
1 Pioneer Kit (Axe, Shovel, Prybar, Bow Saw, Sledgehammer)
1 Shelter Kit (Tarps, Cord, Ropes, Firestarter)
2 "Stokes" basket-style paramedic stretchers
6 Cold Weather kits, assigned by name to team members
4 ration Packs
1 Crate, Water Purification Equipment (Individual & Team)
- Several Drums, Drinking Water, various sizes

## THE SHOTGUN SLUG ROUND

The slug round is an alternate load for a 12-gauge shotgun: Simply a gigantic butter, instead of the normal pellet loads usually fired from such weapons. The slug is pretty massive (nearly 20mm) but because of the loading and the fact it is fired from a shotgun, the round does less damaged than a normal 20mm round, or even the smaller (but more powerful) .50 HMG bullet.

| | |
|---|---|
| NAME | 12 gauge slug round |
| CAL. | .775 (19.6x70mm) |
| E-FACTOR | 25 |
| EFF. RANGE | 150m |
| MAX. RANGE | 1000m |

This round is not normally among those used by the project, which stuck with the 00 magnum buck as a standard load for it's unit. However, any captured slug rounds *will* work in MP 12 gauge shotguns.


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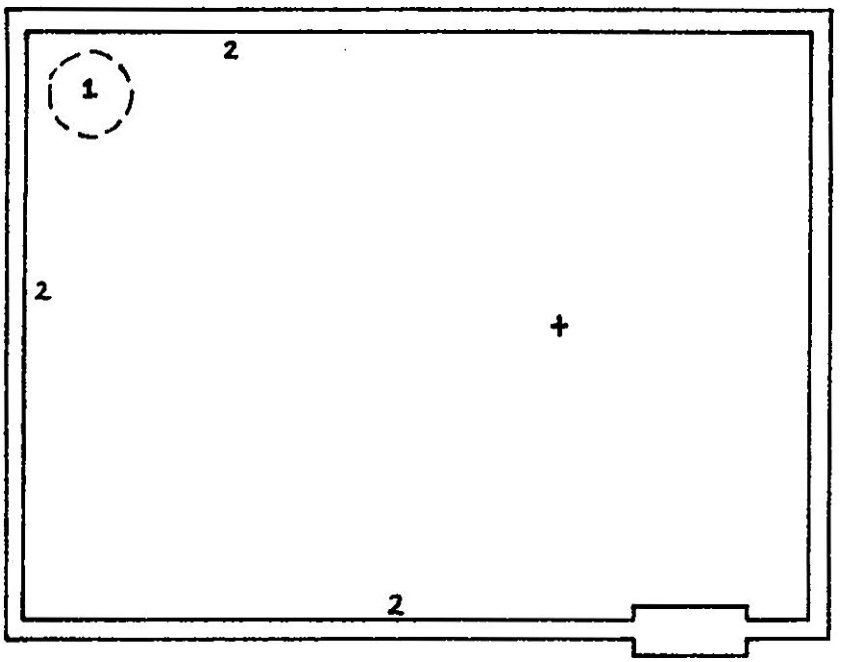
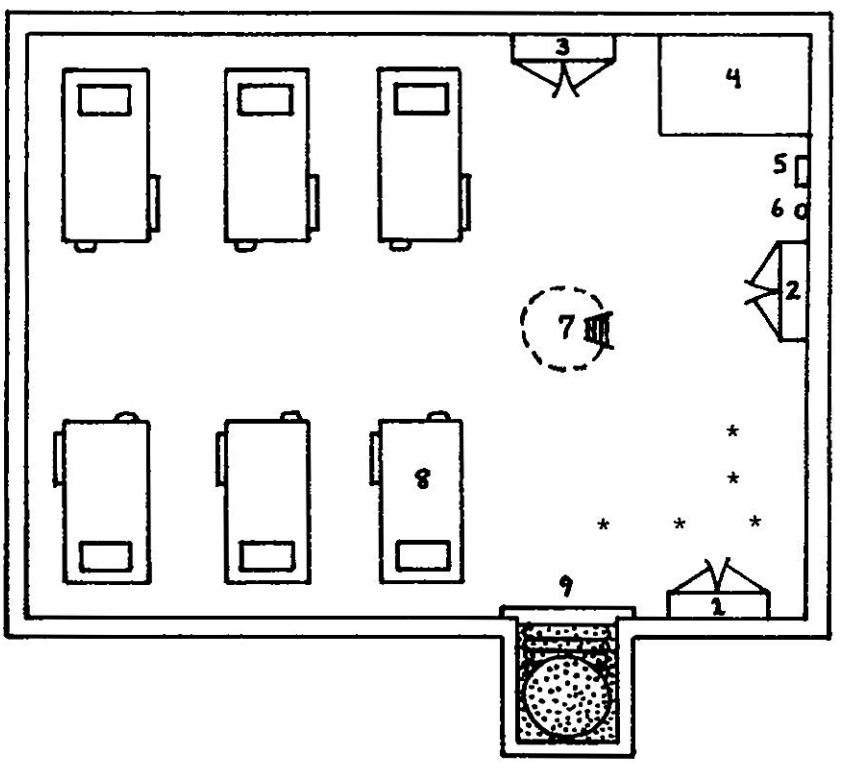



'CRAWLSPACE'

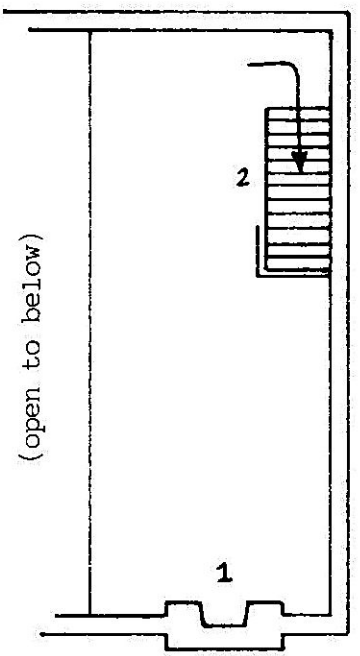
1 Manhole above
2 Vent holes in walls (3)
\+ Bolthole Exit point (buried)




BOLTHOLE

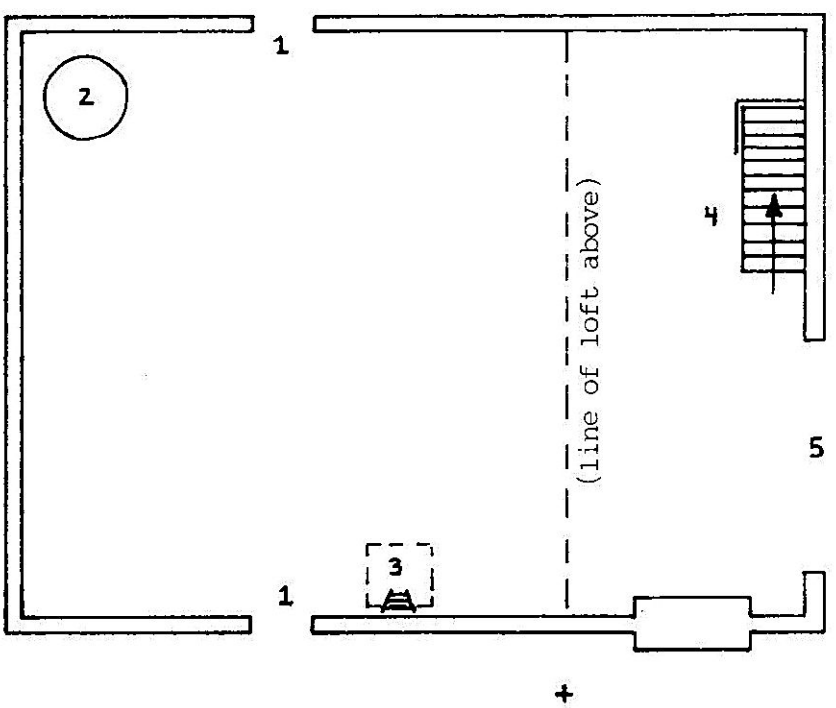
1 Locker #1 (tools)
2 Locker #2 (supplies)
3 Locker #3 (weapons)
4 Computer
5 AN/PRC-70 Radio
6 Antenna Contact Point
7 Personnel Exit above
8 Freeze Tubes (6)
9 Emergency Exit, filled with sand
* Crates

[Dimensions, Exterior]
L = 35.2 ft (10.7 m)
W = 27.1 ft (8.2 m)




LOFT

1 Fireplace
2 Staircase DOWN




GROUND FLOOR

1 Windows (2)
2 Manhole cover
3 Roof Hatch above
4 Staircase UP
5 Open Doorway
\+ Emergency Shaft Exit Point (buried)

# Slow Train Coming

## An INVASION U.S. Adventure

by Joseph Benedetto, Jr.

*John Daniels glanced around the restaurant once before taking his usual seat near the side wall; the only other person in the room (not counting the 2 old women having tea by the window) was Paul McCord, Political Commissioner for the Lower Valley Sector of the Eastern Social Republic; what used to be known as southwestern Pennsyvania before the Soviet takeover. Since McCord was a regular here, just like Daniels, no one paid much attention to him.*

*He was brushing a spot of lint off of his People's Army uniform (Railroad Detachment) when the waitress came over; she slopped a glass of water down on the table before him, opened her pad and looked at him. "What'll it be today, comrade?"*

*Ignoring the sarcasm in her voice, Daniels glanced over the menu for a minute before finally pointing at one of the selections. "Train coming through, soon." he whispered. "Very important cargo. I think your people should do something about it."*

*The waitress shook her head. "Sorry, comrade, we've been out of that for almost a week."*

*Daniels slipped her a $5 bill. "Why don't you check again?" He said, smiling at her. "I'm certain that you might be able to find something back there for me." She took the bill and slipped it into her apron.*

*"Maybe." She turned away, went through the kitchen, and headed for the telephone with Daniels' note inside the folded bill....*

**SLOW TRAIN COMING** is an **INVASION U.S.** adventure for a group of six characters, all members of the American Underground. The characters are locals living in Bridgeville, a small town south of Steel City, ESR (formerly known as Pittsburgh, PA). In the year since the Soviet takeover, they have endeavored to become a minor thorn in the side of the Soviet authorities.

The information John Daniels has passed on concerns a train...a very special train. It will be passing through the Bridgeville area in just under 4 hours; Daniels does not know what it is carrying, but it certainly isn't passengers: The Central Authority gave it a Class A2 clearance to pass. Whatever the cargo is, it must be important if it rates an A2 rating. That means it must be fairly valuable. And in the People's Republic of North America, anything valuable is fair game for stealing by the Underground.

There are several constraints on the players: First of all, they have a limited amount of supplies (see the **PLAYERS WEAPONS** list for details) and can only get a few other things, such as a pickup truck, a couple of walkie talkies, one pair of binoculars and some rope before the train is due through. Also, the local rail HQ's are usually protected by at least a full platoon of Motorized Rifle; the rail yard has a full platoon *and* a tank. Because of this, there is only one good area where the train can be stopped, where the local Soviet forces won't be able to swoop down: Mill Valley west of Bridgeville.

The other areas of the line are either too exposed to Soviet helicopter patrol, or are too close to the nearby towns or Collectives. The two-mile stretch of track leading up Mill Valley to the old Smith Tunnel is the best place to stage the attack.

As locals, the PC's can be assumed to have a working knowledge of the area. The GM should allow the players up to 1 hour in real time to plan the attack and get themselves and their gear into place; remember, they have a deadline to meet if they want to pull this off. Players who argue about what to do and when to do it usually get rushed into action at the last moment with disastrous results.

Considering the proximity of the rail line to several Soviet garrisons, the attack *must* take place in Mill Valley. However, if the players insist on staging the attack someplace else, let them. Merely remember to bring in the Soviet Air Cav and several platoons of troops in APC's the moment they see trouble!

## FACTORS

The PCs are aware of the following facts: The local Soviet garrison is not in a state of alert, although it can respond quickly to calls for help. The train is coming through at a speed of about 45 mph, although it will have to slow down to around 30 mph when it climbs the slight grade into Mill Valley, which should be around 10 minutes past 4 p.m.

The local forces *do* make occasional spot checks of the line, but this is most often by helicopter, and if the pilot sees nothing extremely suspicious, he will fly on. The trees above the track are dense enough to hide even a pickup truck, if need be. On that point the PC's should have no trouble.

No one has any solid idea of what the train is actually carrying, rumor has it to very, very valuable. It is likely that the locomotive and the caboose will have People's Army troops guarding the train. Although it would be easy to simply derail the train, it will be more profitable to the Underground (and more harmful to the Soviets) if the rebels can stop the train and steal the cargo. How the players plan to accomplish this is their business.

## BACKGROUND

The PC's would not know of *these* details: First, the local Soviet HQ (in Carnegie) has started throwing up surprise checkpoints at odd places, running spot checks on everyone's ID papers. (See *Checkpoints*, p.10 in the **INVASION U.S.** gamebook.) Since these are

random and move from day to day, it is unlikely that players will know about the one that is going to show up between them and Mill Valley when they set up their ambush. The Soviets are using regular soldiers, and do not suspect anything is up; this is merely a routine surprise check.

An even larger surprise awaits the PC's: The train they are lying in wait for is actually *two* trains, a freight train and an escort, running through 5 minutes before it! This fact cannot be learned from the merger information Daniels has smuggled out to them; it will only become evident when the trains are actually on their way. Of course, there are clues that might be noticed at the last moment, such as twin horn blasts that sound different from each other; also, the grade leading up to Mill Valley can be seen by a spotter at the mouth of the valley.

The first train is the escort carrying troops and a tank on a flatcar; the second train, running five minutes behind the escort, is a Freight carrying gasoline, motor oil, goods, soldiers, and political prisoners bound for St. Louis, Missouri Detention Center - a radioactive hell from which few ever return. (See the **TRAIN COMPOSITION & CREW DISPOSITION CHART** for exact details on the train.)

But little of the details are *obvious*: The tank cars have only tiny placards, readable at close range; the box cars are not marked at all. However, if the players will think things out, they may discover the reasons why such elaborate precautions are being taken.

If the players are smart, they will place a spotter at the mouth of the valley with a walkie talkie; such a person can spot the 2 trains while the escort is still about 3 miles away...at 30 mph that means the players will have a maximum of *6* minutes in *real time* to change their original plans and decide on how to handle the 2 trains! (You should get out a watch and say "Go!" at this point.) Even if there is no spotter, the players will hear *2* different train whistles as they await the springing of the ambush. If none of the players catches on, roll under WIZ for each character to realize what this means. In these circumstances, the players will have only *4* minutes of real time to change their plans.

## AND ABOUT TRAINS....

Actual trains are not like those old cartoons and those toys we once played with: The "real" trains as big, noisy, and old. Few boxcars actually have walkways on top of them anymore, and virtually none have roof hatches. Even the tank cars lack the catwalks and handrails so prevalent on scale models. And the handwheels that manually set the brakes on each car are often rusty and untrustworthy. Players who have romantic ideas of jumping onto the train as it passes and then leaping across the rooftops are in for some very **BIG** disappointments!

A diesel locomotive is a huge, heavy object: By it's sheer weight alone it qualifies as an armored vehicle. Still, a blown bridge or felled tree will stop it, and a well-placed stick of dynamite will derail it relatively easily. What effect this has on the cargo should be determined by the GM!

This is not to say that players cannot jump the train and then do heroics, like hang from a handhold and fiddle with coupler between the engine and the rest of the train! It's just wise to point out to the GM that what the players have in mind and actual reality may be 2 very separate things.

The escort is there to make sure that the track is clear of obstructions, like blown bridges and felled trees. The gondola full of Euro-Soviet troops is a box of sacrificial sheep: If anything is planted under the tracks, they are going to be the first to find out! For this reason, the GM should make these troops quite alert and concerned about sabotage.

As to the second train, they are a lot less concerned, since they feel safe behind the escort. They are not expecting trouble. Indeed, considering that there are two platoons of Motorized Rifle present, backed up by a tank, the KGB are feeling pretty smug about the whole thing!

One important note: 1 of the 2 KGB agents aboard the second train is a woman with closely cropped blonde hair, known to the resistance as "Red Jennifer". She is an expert in torture, and is a prime target of the Underground. She has *double* the normal point value if killed, and *4 times* the normal point value if captured! Of course, the PC's don't know she's aboard, and it may take an INT roll to spot her during a gunfight. (The GM should roll secretly for each PC involved; on a 10% or less, that character has a personal score to settle with Red Jennifer.) She is one of a tiny handful of trusted Americans who holds a high office with the KGB, and is renowned for her techniques in making even the hardest prisoners break. (It is rumored that the best of the lot become members of her "stable", although there is little to support this accusation.) Overall, she is rated high on the list of things the Underground wants eradicated. For this trip to the St. Louis, Missouri Detention Center, she has what she calls "a special toy;" Jilin Chang, a captured Chinese Army saboteur. Red Jennifer has her handcuffed to a toilet in one of the passenger cars' two bathrooms, and goes back every hour or so to "convince" Chang to talk about her mission; Chang has been gagged to keep her cries from bothering the other people in the car. If the players can rescue Chang, it will be worth an extra 1000 points.

How the players handle the ambush will be interesting, to say the least. The GM should encourage them to do more than merely mine the tracks and sneak away; the rumors of important cargo are true, although how much of it the players can use is uncertain: Gasoline, motor oil, KGB records and files, and (or course) the 35 political prisoners. It may seem hopeless at first glance, but if they let the escort pass and then stop the freight train, it will be easier: A few well-placed grenades

could decimate the troops packed in the passenger car, and it will take many minutes for the escort to stop and back up; a fast team can profit handsomely.

## THE GREAT CHINESE ARMY OF AMERICAN LIBERATION

The **GCAAL** sent support to the Bridgeville area 2 months ago in the form of an air drop of 4 Chinese Army personnel and 2 Fast Attack Vehicles. Due to Soviet Air Intercept during the transport's approach run, the **GCAAL** unit jumped into the wrong zone and came down in the middle of Carnegie, 5 miles away, and only blocks from the local Soviet HQ. Only one of the **GCAAL**, Jilin Chang, escaped and was last seen limping into the trees east of town; her current whereabouts are unknown. Local rebels managed to recover a Chicom Type 56 rifle and some ammunition before being driven off by Soviet troops; the remainder of the **GCAAL** equipment was lost. Is it doubtful that the **GCAAL** will be making another such drop anytime soon.

**RIFLE Semi-Auto "Type 56"**

ROP 1 AMO FGI
ROL B CYC n/a
CAP 10 WTE 7.8
CIR 1956 MIS 1%d
HSM +3 KDM +1

| PB | VS | SH | ME | LO | EX |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| -1 | 0 | +2 | +3 | +1 | -3 |

EFFECTIVE EX +
5d 2d
SPC (d)

An effective Chinese copy of the old Soviet SKS rifle, predecessor of the AK-47. A particularly strong and simple design equipped with a folding bayonet under the barrel. The weapon uses the same ammo as the AK-47 and the RPK. (*7,62mm M43*)

## OTHER CHINESE WEAPONS

Because of their former association with the Soviets, the Chinese use weapons that are very close copies of the standard Soviet ones. For this reason, the **GCAAL** weapons dropped to the American rebels can use ammunition stolen from Soviet stocks.

The 4 basic weapons used by the Chinese are the AK-47, the Type 50 (a copy of the PPSh-41 "Burp Gun), the Type 56 (a copy of the Soviet SKS rifle, a weapon no in use by the Soviet forces, although it is used in both Yugoslavia and China) and the type 64, a silenced submachinegun designed and built by the Chinese. If the GM needs to give GCAAL forces or rebel units Chinese weapons, he may use these. (The stats for the Type 64 SMG are listed below.)

**MACHINE GUN, SILENCED "Type 64"**

ROF 1 to 3 AMO FH
ROL A CYC 30a
CAP 30 WTE 7.4
CIR 1964 MIS 1%d
HSM +1 KDM --

| PB | VS | SH | ME | LO | EX |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| -1 | 0 | 0 | -1 | -3 | -8 |

EFFECTIVE EX +
3d 1d
SPC (b/g, n)

A Chinese weapon designed for silenced operations. The Type 64 will operate quietly firing the same ammo as the PPSH-41 (as SPC b) but works better with ammunition designed specifically for it (as SPC g). (*7.62mm type P*) (*7.62mm type S*)

## PLAYERS WEAPONS

The following cache of weapons and gear are available to the players' group as a whole.

1 Marlin 1984 Level-action Rifle w/25 rds (AMO P)
1 RPk LMG w/1 75-rd drum (AMO F)
1 M16 A2 w/3 30-rd clips (AMO F)
1 12-gauge Sport Shotgun w/20 rds (AMO L1)
1 Type 56 Chicom Rifle w/4 10-rd clips (AMO F)
1 Modern Crossbow w/11 bolts (BOLT TYPE E 02)
1 Colt M1911-A1 Pistol w/2 7-rd clips (AMO J)
1 S&W M10 .38 Revolver w/18 rds (AMO G)
1 S&W M29 .44 Revolver w/10 rds (AMO P)
4 M33 Fragmentation Grenades
1 RKG-3M Anti-Tank Grenade
10 Sticks, Commercial Dynamite
3 Blasting Cap Detonators (5-second delay)
1 Contact Detonator (Impact)
1 Remote Detonator (Short-Range Radio Signal, 1 mile limit)

This list comprises all of the weapons and ammunition that the players have managed to stockpile during the last year. The players will have to plan carefully to make the optimum use of their limited weaponry, but it can be done.

## ENEMY WEAPONS

Because of the nature of the operation, the units involved are travelling light; the following is an outline of what *each individual* in a particular group will have on them at the moment of the attack. There are no other weapons present, nor are there any supplies of ammunition on board the train.

EURO-SOVIET: 1 AK-47 w/2 30-rd clips (AMO F)
TRAIN ENGINEER: unarmed
SOVIET OFFICER: 1 Makarov PM 9mm Pistol w/1 8-rd clip (AMO F)
KGB: 1 CZ Model 75 9mm Pistol w/3 15-rd clips (AMO H)
SOVIET SOLDIER: 1 AKS-74 w/2 40-rd clips (AMO K)
PEOPLE'S ARMY: either 1 AK-47 w/1 30-rd clip (AMO F), or 1 PPSH-41 w/1 35-rd clip (AMO F)

These figures are the standard gear and weaponry that any one person will have available to them at the moment of the attack. It should be noted that some of the People's Army have been equipped with the obsolete PPSh-41 "Burp Gun" instead of the more common AK-47; this is because the local Soviet Military Supply Commander is trying to clear out his stocks and trade the AK's to a nearby Euro-

Soviet unit in exchange for some "non-essential" (comfort) items.

## TRAIN COMPOSITION & CREW DISPOSITION CHART

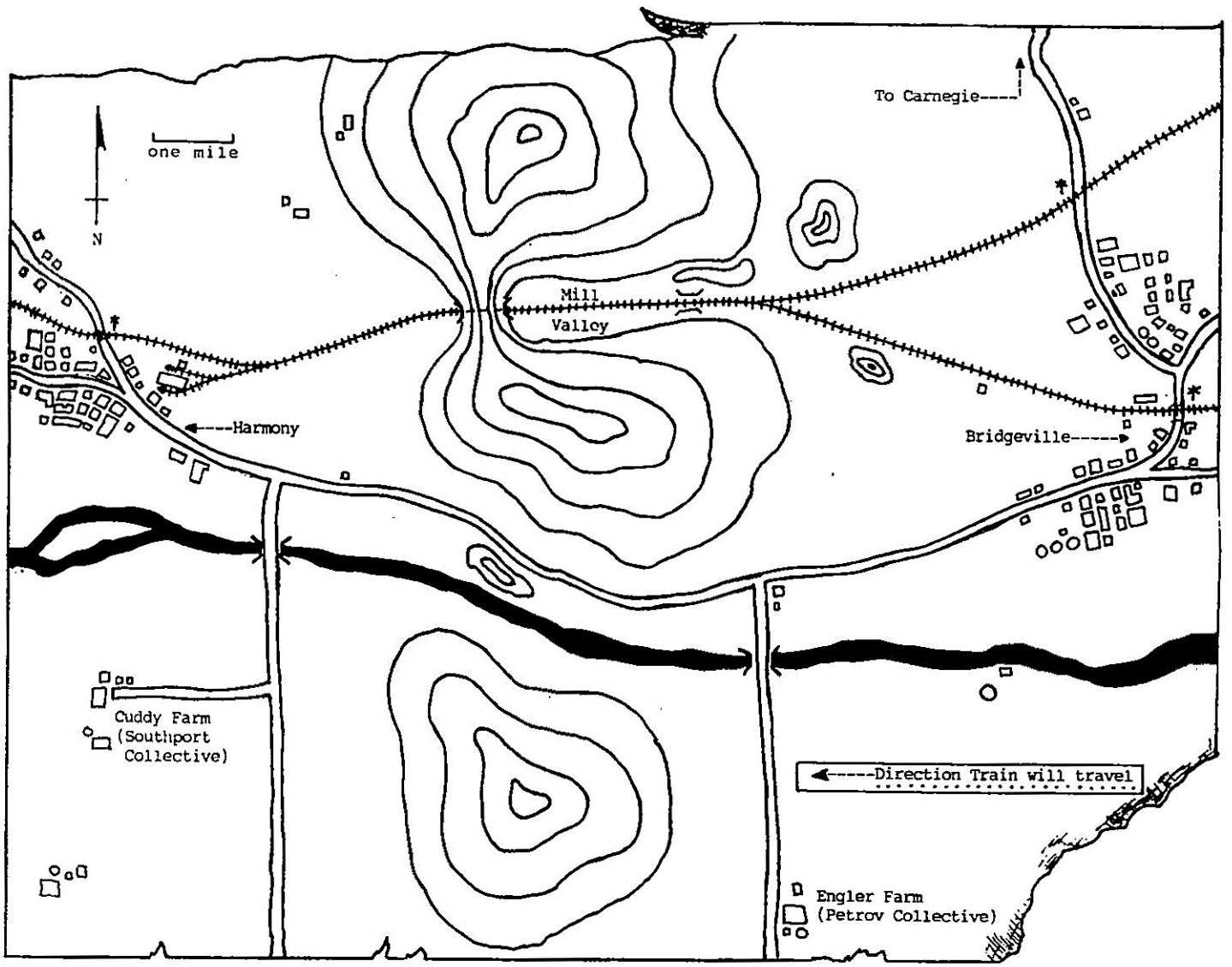
### ESCORT TRAIN

1 Open Gondola (2 Squads Euro-Soviet MRR)
1 Flatcar (1 T-62A Tank with Crew of 3, Euro-Soviet)
1 Diesel Locomotive (2-man crew, Civilian)
1 Caboose (2 Soviet Officers, 2 KGB, 2 People's Army)

### FREIGHT TRAIN

2 Diesel Locomotives (each w/1 engineer, Civilian)
3 Tank Cars (Gasoline)
1 Tank Car (Motor Oil)
3 Boxcars ("confiscated goods")
1 Boxcar (35 political prisoners)
1 Passenger Car ( 1 Platoon Soviet MRR, 2 Officers, 2 KGB)
1 Caboose (4 People's Army)

The two trains are travelling the same line with only a 5-minute gap in distance between them. Although the 2 are *supposed* to be in constant radio contact with each other, the system functions only 30% of the time; if it fails it will be out of order until the end of the trip. In that event, the two trains will use a combinations of visual signals (In straightaways) and blasts on the air horns (in curves, tunnels, etc.).



# Buck Rogers: Battle For The 25th Century

**Published By: *TSR, Inc.***
**Designer: Jeff Grubb**
**Developer: Flint Dille**
**Price: $24.95**
**Complexity Level: Low**
**Rules Clarity: Good**
**Reviewed By: Tony Watson**

A couple of months ago, after a game of **FORTRESS AMERICA**, several friends and I were wondering when ***Milton Bradley*** would turn its attention to a space game. After all, titles like **FORTRESS AMERICA, SHOGUN** and **AXIS & ALLIES** are big hits; gamers seem to like their fast play, the interesting settings and all those little plastic airplanes, hovertanks and samurai that fill the game boxes. An SF game, with an outer space setting, seemed a natural - and think of the little spaceships they could come up with! Well, there's a game that fits that description on the market now, but someone's beat ***MB*** to the punch: It's ***TSR*** that has produced **BUCK ROGERS.**

**BUCK ROGERS** (subtitled **BATTLE FOR THE 25TH CENTURY**) is the vanguard of a new ***TSR*** line of Buck Rogers products. It certainly fits the model that the ***MB*** games have established. The physical quality is first rate. There's a mounted, full color mapboard, over 400 plastic spaceships and troopers in six colors, a sheet of informational counters, a deck of cards, 5 10-sided dice, 2 rulebooks and sundry other game parts.

As the title indicates, the game is ostensibly set in the "Buck Rogers milieu", but that's a connection that seems to be mostly for color. Play of the game doesn't do a whole lot to evoke the stories it's based on.

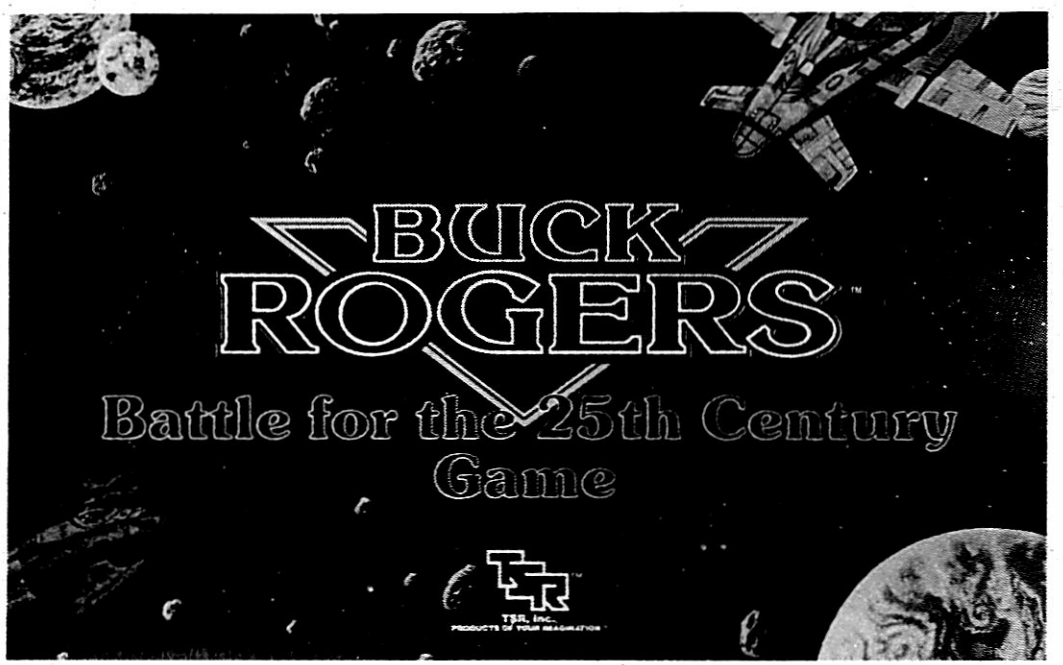
Up to 6 can play, each taking a faction headed up by a character from the stories; there Buck, of course, Wilma Deering, Killer Kane, and so forth. The mapboard depicts the inner solar system, from Mercury to the asteroid belt, with a system display for tracking the orbits of the planets and the movement of ships. Planetary displays are divided into surface territories as well as moons and space colonies.

The rules come in both basic and advanced versions. The basic game is pretty simple and you can set up and be playing a half hour after opening the box for the first time. The advanced rules build on the simpler set, and make for a more interesting game (but bear in mind that all in all, this is a pretty straight forward and uncomplicated game). Laudably, the designer has included a large number of optional rules and victory conditions, so it's easy to alter the game to suit individual tastes.

**BUCK ROGERS** is a battle for control of the solar system. Victory conditions hinge on the control of planet areas, or the elimination of opposing leaders. Each side will command space fleets made up of three types of ships, and land armies comprised of space troopers and humans genetically altered for individual planetary environments ("Gennies"). For the production of new units, there are factories, and killer satellites can be launched to defend orbital space. Leader pieces add combat bonuses to the forces they are with.

**BUCK ROGERS** is an introductory game, and it plays smoothly and simply. All sides move, followed by combat (Phasing that distinctly favors those moving later, though this is rectified to a great degree in the advanced game.). Combat is simply a matter of lining up opposing fleets or armies and rolling away with 10-sided dice; the number needed to hit is found by cross indexing the firing unit to the target. To be sure, there's a bit of chrome - the leader bonuses, killer satellite attacks, transport screening, commando assaults against factories - but it's pretty mundane stuff.

I think that's more or less my overall opinion of **BUCK ROGERS**. While the game is certainly attractive, and the design clear and simple, I didn't find it particularly interesting from a strategic standpoint or evocative of it subject matter. It's a competent, playable game, but not a very exciting one, and not as interesting, for example, as any of the 3 ***MB*** games mentioned above. **BUCK ROGERS** is a nice try, but I'll still wait for ***MB*** to try their hand at an SF game in the format they've made famous.



# SILLY NAME, GREAT GAME

## A Review of GURPS 3rd Edition

**Published By: *Steve Jackson Games***
**Designer: Steve Jackson**
**Price: $19.95**
**Complexity Level: Low to Moderate**
**Rules Clarity: Excellent**
**Graphics Quality: Excellent**
**Reviewed By: Michael DeWolfe**

How can a good game get better? Publish a 2nd edition with significant improvements. How can it get better still? Publish a 3rd edition. **GURPS (The Generic Universal Role Playing System)** is now in its 3rd edition.

It is much improved from it's 2 earlier editions. It is now in a single bound, soft cover edition: A whopping 256 pages! It has rules for magic and psionics, new advantages and disadvantages, new skills, new gamemastering rules, more combat options and rules than before. It has - for the 3rd time - been gone over with a fine tooth comb to eliminate typos and rules ambiguities. All new additions and everything that has crossover interest from other worldbooks is repeated here. This is one complete volume.

Disadvantages like Gullibility, Compulsive Lying Absent Mindedness (or was that there?) are added. New skills, like Performance, split hairs (where before there only Acting). New rules in combat include the likes of Retreating and Bleeding. New tips for gamemastering include running a Cinematic Campaign (Read: **Rambo**).

### THE BASIC SYSTEM

The basic system is very reminiscent of ***Steve Jackson's*** earlier RPG venture, **The Fantasy Trip**; but only in basic framework. It employs 3 dice for all skill and ability rolls. Characters are built on points, not random die rolls. Advantages (above average stats and skills) cost points. Disadvantages (shortcomings, disabilities, enemies, etc.) give you bonus points to spend elsewhere. You build your character like a car. There are checks and balances within the system, making you want to keep the character fair and very role-playable.

There are 4 stats: Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence and Health. Intuition, Willpower, Endurance, Charisma, Luck and all of the other qualities that can be endowed in a character are handled in advantages and disadvantages. Others of these cover everything from Absolute Direction through Youth and Weak Will. If you can think of it, it's probably here.

The system works on another level: Varying complexity. If you want a system where the most complex action is an attack roll, you can do that. If you want a system that includes rules for bad footing, hit locations, vital organs, parrying, all-out attacks, bleedings, stunning (ad infinitium) you have that too. Both are the same, but at varying levels of complexity. The level is what you decide - pick and choose.

Rules for magic and psionics are much needed and have luckily been included, where in earlier editions they were brushed off. Stats exist for weapons from flails and clubs through to Walter PPK's and hollow point bullets. This entire package is designed for use in any setting.

It is laid out in a two column format. One column of main info and a sidebar of supplementary data. The style works. It's easy to read and conversational.

It's faults? Character generation is time consuming and usually difficult without the aid of a calculator. This isn't because of number crunching; you have to balance out stats, advantages and skills versus initial points and disadvantages. It has a good number of worldbook settings, but is still supported by a low number of adventures. **GURPS** will live or die by its support material. Hopefully, if ***SJ Games*** doesn't produce these, they will license them out.

### SUMMARY

The edition is generic. Where the earlier 2 editions were generic with a strong fantasy shift, this coming of **GURPS** is truly all purpose. It can be used for anything from cavemen through to space fantasy. The worldbooks **greatly** add to the genre they deal with, but are now not essential fixtures to your gaming.

This game has looked at its peers and built on all of them; avoiding their mistakes and following their successes. If you're looking for a good point generation system, get **GURPS**. If you're looking for a truly generic system, get **GURPS**. If you're looking for a painstakingly coherent system, get **GURPS**. If you want a fine RPG, get this game. It is worth it.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# Eeffug the Giant

## An Encounter for Runequest

**By Galan Akin**

This encounter can be used on its own, or integrated into a larger wilderness adventure to liven things up a little. The antagonist is a pretty tough character, so the PC's should be resourceful and at least somewhat experienced.

While the adventurers are wandering through the wilderness, they come across a small valley in the middle of a primeval wood. The valley is bisected by a small, clear stream. On one side of the stream the valley side is thickly wooded. The other side is not as steep and has rolling hills covered in grass.

What immediately catches the PCs' attention, however, is what is asleep on the grassy side of the valley. An immense humanoid, over five times taller than any member of the group, has his head pillowed on an outcropping of stone and is snoring violently. Further down the slope, a wooly mammoth grazes. Higher up on the ridge, the characters see a brown bear standing on 2 legs and shading his eyes with 1 paw. He appears to be acting as if he is on watch.

The giant appears to have made a camp. He has set up a large fire pit, and huge cooking utensils, amphorae, cauldrons, sacks, etc. lie about in no particular order. The adventurers also notice a large stack of (probably very valuable) furs. Four humans can be seen close to the giants feet. They are in chains. Another figure, apparently that of a child, seems to be preparing a meal for the 4 captives.

At this point, it is up to the PC's to make the next move. Unless they specifically say they are trying to remain hidden, however, the brown bear will notice them and wake the giant, who will immediately attack them.

## *GM CHARACTERS*

The primary element of this scenario is the GM characters, who are much more important than the setting. You, the GM, should feel free to include these characters in any scenario and any setting you like.

### Eeffug the Smart (10m tall giant)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| STR 90 | | Move 10 | |
| CON 59 | | Hit Points 70 | |
| SIZ 81 | | Fatigue 149 | |
| INT 16 | | Magic Points | |
| POW 13 | | DEX SR 4 | |
| DEX 8 | | | |
| APP 6 | | | |

| Weapon | SR | Damage | AT% | PA% | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Club | 4 | 3D6 + 9D6 | 55% | 30% | 19 |

Treasure: 4 giant gold coins (each worth 600p), gold earing worth 500p, giant book(SIZ 5) with Create Familiar INT, POW, and DEX

| location | melee | missile | points |
|---|---|---|---|
| R leg | 01-04 | 01-03 | 15/24 |
| L leg | 05-08 | 04-06 | 15/24 |
| Abdomen | 09-11 | 07-10 | 17/24 |
| Chest | 12 | 11-15 | 17/29 |
| R arm | 13-15 | 16-17 | 15/18 |
| L arm | 16-18 | 18-19 | 15/18 |
| Head | 19-20 | 20 | 15/24 |

Spells: (sorcery) Animate Rock 32%, Dominate Human 50%, Shape Change: Human to Moth 12%, Diminish DEX 42%, Duration 40%, Intensity 54%, Multispell 62%

Skills: Throw 80%, Smell Blood 60%, Track 15%, Read/Write 55%

Magic: Giant-sized iron ring with Glue-7 matrix, magic diamond which stores up to 6 magic points (worth 4,000p)

Eeffug is fairly typical of his kind: He is mean, evil-tempered, immensely strong, and loves the taste of human flesh. He is quite intelligent and has learned to use sorcery magic. Unlike most giants, Eeffug will try to capture and enslave humans he meets, rather than kill them right off. Eeffug treats his slaves cruely, and once they are of no use to him he will kill them and eat them. He currently has 5 slaves. He has a small rogue wooly mammoth, his pet and pack animal, and a brown bear familiar.

## Appak (mammoth pack animal)

STR 40 Move 6
CON 28 Hit Points 35
SIZ 41 Fatigue 68
INT 6 Magic Points 8
POW 8 DEX SR 3
DEX 15

| location | D20 | points |
|---|---|---|
| RH leg | 01-02 | 8/12 |
| LH leg | 03-04 | 8/12 |
| Hind Q | 05-08 | 8/15 |
| Fore Q | 09-12 | 8/15 |
| RF leg | 13-14 | 8/12 |
| LF leg | 15-16 | 8/12 |
| Trunk | 17 | 4/9 |
| Head | 18-20 | 8/12 |

| Weapon | SR | Damage | AT% | PA% | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trunk | 6 | grapple | 50% | - | - |
| Rear & Plunge | 6 | 2D8 + 5D6 | 25% | - | - |
| Trample | 6 | 10D6 vs downed foe | 52% | - | - |
| Tusk | 6 | 5D6 | 48% | - | - |

Skills: Smell Intruder 60%, Listen 59%

## Bossag (brown bear familiar)

STR 25 Move 7
CON 18 Hit Points 19
SIZ 20 Fatigue 43
INT 10 Magic Points 12
POW 12 DEX SR 2
DEX 16

| location | melee | missile | points |
|---|---|---|---|
| RH leg | 01-02 | 01-02 | 3/6 |
| LH leg | 03-04 | 03-04 | 3/6 |
| Hind Q | 05-07 | 05-09 | 3/9 |
| Fore Q | 08-10 | 10-14 | 3/9 |
| RF leg | 11-13 | 15-16 | 3/6 |
| LF leg | 14-16 | 17-18 | 3/6 |
| Head | 17-20 | 19-20 | 3/7 |

| Weapon | SR | Damage | AT% | PA% | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | 5 | 1D10 + 2D6 | 35% | - | - |
| Claw | 8 | 1D6 + 2D6 | 80% | - | - |

Spells: Diminish DEX 40%, Spirit Resistance 38%, Hinder 36%, Intensity 46%

Skills: Climb 40%, Dodge 35%, Listen 80%, Scan 65%, Search 34%, Track 97%, Sneak 32%

## Helmberth (human warrior)

STR 17 Move 3
CON 16 Hit Points 16
SIZ 15 Fatigue 33
INT 14 Magic Points 14
POW 14 DEX SR 2
DEX 17 Damage Bonus + D4
APP 15

Skills: Boat 86%, Climb 70%, Dodge 89%, Jump 62%, Ride Horse 80%, Swim 62%, Throw 92%, Sneak 35%, Animal Lore 70%, Craft (Tailor 30%), First Aid 50%, Human Lore 63%, Martial Arts 90%, World Lore 48%, Devise 21%, Listen 82%, Scan 64%, Track 79%, Hide 59%

| location | melee | missile | points |
|---|---|---|---|
| R leg | 01-04 | 01-03 | 2/6 |
| L leg | 05-08 | 04-06 | 2/6 |
| Abdomen | 09-11 | 07-10 | 2/6 |
| Chest | 12 | 11-15 | 2/8 |
| R arm | 13-15 | 16-17 | 2/5 |
| L arm | 16-18 | 18-19 | 2/5 |
| Head | 19-20 | 20 | 0/6 |

Helmberth is Hurlin's eldest son, and is a powerful warrior (although he is no match for a giant). He will be the one Hurlin sends to bestow the reward on the adventurers, and may join the party at that time, at the GM's discretion. He can use the spear at 88% (parry 70%) and javelin at 75%. He wears 2 point leather armor.

## Hurlin (43 year old human merchant)

STR 9 Move 3
CON 11 Hit Points 12
SIZ 13 Fatigue 20
INT 17 Magic Points 15
POW 15 DEX SR 3
DEX 10
APP 14

Skills: Boat 62%, Dodge 17%, Ride Horse 61%, Fast Talk 71%, Orate 59%, Craft (Cooper 80%, Healer 16%, Leatherworker 90%, Potter 72%, Tailor 100%), Evaluate 95%, First Aid 60%, Human Lore 99%, Mineral Lore 58%, Plant Lore 77%, Search 58%, Ship Handling 46%, World Lore 82%, Devise 60%

| location | melee | missile | points |
|---|---|---|---|
| R leg | 01-04 | 01-03 | 0/4 |
| L leg | 05-08 | 04-06 | 0/4 |
| Abdomen | 09-11 | 07-10 | 1/4 |
| Chest | 12 | 11-15 | 1/5 |
| R arm | 13-15 | 16-17 | 0/3 |
| L arm | 16-18 | 18-19 | 0/3 |
| Head | 19-20 | 20 | 0/4 |

Spells: (spirit magic 61%) Binding Enchantment, Detect Magic, Detect Gold, Detect Silver, Dull Blade 4, Heal 4, Ignite, Protection 3, Repair 6

Hurlin is an aging barbarian merchant, who, along with his 3 sons as guards, were captured by Eeffug while transporting goods from his homeland to a more civilized region. The giant would have killed them all, but he learned that Hurlin has a ransom of 5,000 pennies. He plans to one day go to the merchant's homeland to collect the ransom. Hurlin's spells are not sufficient to aid him in escape, and he does not wish to anger the giant, so he hasn't used them. He is a skilled business man, but an honest one.

If the adventurers rescue Hurlin and his 3 sons, and give him back his possessions (2,000 pennies, and all of the furs in the giant's hoard) so he can return home, he will give them 500 of it and promise to send them 3,000 pennies worth of gems as soon as possible. If the players believe him, and give a place where they can be contacted, then 4-6 months later one of his sons will deliver the reward as promised. He wears a fur vest for 1 AP covering his torso.

## Kalbith (human male)

STR 10_____ Move 3
CON 8_____ Hit Points 9_____
SIZ 9_____ Fatigue 18_____
INT 15_____ Magic Points 9_____
POW 9_____ DEX SR 2
DEX 18_____
APP 10_____

Skills: Boat 46%, Dodge 61%, Ride Horse 81%, Fast Talk 76%, Evaluate 93%, Martial Arts 90%, Read/Write 60%. Ship Handling 37%, World Lore 79%, Conceal 91%, Devise 67%, Sleight 92%, Listen 98%, Scan 61%, Search 48%, Track 63%, Ride 96%, Sneak 98%

| location | melee | missile | points |
|---|---|---|---|
| R leg | 01-04 | 01-03 | 2/3_____ |
| L leg | 05-08 | 04-06 | 2/3_____ |
| Abdomen | 09-11 | 07-10 | 3/3_____ |
| Chest | 12 | 11-15 | 2/4_____ |
| R arm | 13-15 | 16-17 | 0/2_____ |
| L arm | 16-18 | 18-19 | 0/2_____ |
| Head | 19-20 | 20 | 0/3_____ |

Kalbith is the least honest of Hurlin's sons. He is spiteful, cowardly, and greedy. He is a skilled thief, but has so far been unsuccessful in any escape attempts. He can use a spear at 51% (parry 64%).

## Telesan (human male)

STR 14_____ Move 3
CON 16_____ Hit Points 15_____
SIZ 14_____ Fatigue 30_____
INT 15_____ Magic Points 15_____
POW 15_____ DEX SR 3
DEX 13_____
APP 13_____

Skills: Boat 64%, Dodge 68%, Ride Horse 60%, Fast Talk 79%, Orate 37%, Animal Lore 62%, Craft (as Hurlin's skills -10), First Aid 39%, Human Lore 76%, Plant Lore 42%, Mineral Lore 61%, Read/Write 49%, World Lore 69%, Ship Handling 67%, Devise 42%, Hide 37%

| location | melee | missile | points |
|---|---|---|---|
| R leg | 01-04 | 01-03 | 0/5_____ |
| L leg | 05-08 | 04-06 | 0/5_____ |
| Abdomen | 09-11 | 07-10 | 2/5_____ |
| Chest | 12 | 11-15 | 2/6_____ |
| R arm | 13-15 | 16-17 | 0/4_____ |
| L arm | 16-18 | 18-19 | 0/4_____ |
| Head | 19-20 | 20 | 1/5_____ |

Teleasn is, of Hurlin's sons, the most like his father. He is a good merchant. He can use a spear at 41% (parry 38%). He wears a 2 point vest and a 1 point hat.

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## Tonki Fernig (female halfling)

STR 6 Move 2
CON 20 Hit Points 12
SIZ 4 Fatigue 26
INT 15 Magic Points 7
POW 7 DEX SR 2
DEX 19
APP 15

| location | melee | missile | points |
|---|---|---|---|
| R leg | 01-04 | 01-03 | 2/4 |
| L leg | 05-08 | 04-06 | 2/4 |
| Abdomen | 09-11 | 07-10 | 2/4 |
| Chest | 12 | 11-15 | 2/5 |
| R arm | 13-15 | 16-17 | 0/3 |
| L arm | 16-18 | 18-19 | 0/3 |
| Head | 19-20 | 20 | 0/4 |

Skills: Dodge 85%, Climb 42%, Throw 91%, Fast Talk 77%, Sing 49%, Craft(cook 100%), First Aid 72%, Plant Lore 61%, Conceal 100%, Devise 74%, Sleight 46%, Play Flute 79%, Listen 91%, Scan 48%, Search 83%, Track 12%, Hide 99%, Sneak 93%

Tonki is an adventurous and mischievious young halfling. She made her living by cooking and entertaining, and by stealing on the side. She was caught in the act of trying to steal something from Eeffug, but persuaded him not to eat her by becoming his cook and entertainer. She is an excellent cook, although she has refused to prepare sentient beings for the giant (if anyone else did this, he would probably kill him or her). Eeffug has grown quite fond of the halfling, and treats her far better than the rest of the slaves, although he still keeps her feet chained together.

### TREASURE

All the treasure possessed by the giant, excluding what he carries on his person, is normally by Appak. When the adventurers run across Eeffug's camp the treasure is out in the open, piled up near the giant.

The following items can be found scatted about the encampment: 3 huge iron cauldrons, 3,000 pennies worth of assorted furs, several sacks filled with a total of 2,000 pennies, assorted giant cookware, 20 days of giants rations, giant blanket, 5 110 litre amphorae filled with water, 2 kegs of rum, 10 giant torches, large jug (2 giant doses, 8 human doses) of healing potion (cures of to 8 hit points of general hit points), giant fire starter, 3 spears (belonging to Hurlin's three sons) 1 dagger with jeweled hilt (800 pennies, belongs to Hurlin), flail with Bludgeon 5 matrix.

### FINAL NOTES

The main purpose of this article is to provide some interesting NPC's, to be included into any scenario. The GM can use the characters separately if he wishes.

If the adventurers attack the giant and his allies, the merchant and his sons will help as much as possible. The halfling will try to escape if possible. If she cannot, she will help the adventurers if they appear to be winning, but will take no side if the giant has the upper hand.

If the adventurers slay the giant, the barbarians will be greatful. The halfling will thank them, but will try to escape as soon as possible. She may return at a suitable time to pilfer from the party. The adventurers may accompany the barbarians back to their homeland, in which case they will be assured of getting their reward. If they do travel with Hurlin and his sons for awhile, remember to take into account their personalities (especially Kalbith, who may turn out to be quite treacherous).

# The Giant Squid:

## A Creature For Runequest

**By Tim Bailey**

The giant squid is a deep sea relative of the smaller squid, and belongs to the mollusk group of invertebrates. Giant squid survive off of sea dwelling animals of comparable size to their own, and will occasionally take on animals much larger than themselves. They are generally rogue feeders, and rarely travel in groups. On rare occasions they will attack a passing ship, which it will grapple with and attempt to pull under. In this situation it will also attempt to drag men over to a watery grave, if it can.

Giant squid are completely without skeletons, but they do possess a large, sharp beak at the nexus of the 10 tentacles. The arms are designed for 2 separate purposes, thusly being separated into 2 long and 8 short in length. The 2 long arms wrap around the victim and hold it fast, and the 8 short tentacles grasp it and keep it close to its beak, which it uses to sever the spinal cord of its victim. It then slowly picks at the flesh, eating only 40% to 60% of it.

As do octopuses, squid possess the ability to change color at will, to blend with their environment. Their pigmentation also reflects, to a limited extent, their present state of emotion. For example, if they are enraged, they take on a darker color than normal. Squids can also produce an inklike fluid, which they store in a sac near the anus. When alarmed, they expel this in or out of the water, and can use it every three days or so. Giant squid propel themselves by forcibly expelling water through a funnel near their mouths.

## Notes:

If the squid is sufficiently alarmed, or has taken a great amount of damage, it will spray it's foe with it's ink. The ink, if it hits, will cover the target(s) from head to toe. It will blind them for 1D4 + 1 melee rounds, during which they will be unable to see clearly. The ink soon after will dye whatever touches it requires one to three of scrubbing. As soon as it has been sprayed, it will retreat back to the murky depths from which it came.

The squid uses the following strategies when attacking: It slashes first, attempting to drag or knock its victim into submission. Once it has a successful hit, it will then attempt to crush the victim with its 2 long tentacles(arms). Once it has dragged its victim under the surface, and has crushed the fight out of it, it will attempt to bite and devour it.

## Characteristics

| | Average | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STR 4D6 + 40 | 54 | Move: 7 | Weapon | SR | A% | Damage |
| CON 3D6 + 30 | 40-41 | Hit Points: 68 | Tentacle(Slash) | 6 | 40 + 7 | 1D6 + 8D6 |
| SIZ 4D6 + 80 | 94 | Fatigue: 135 | Tentacle(Crush) | 9 | 50 + 7 | 2D6 + 8D6 |
| POW 4D6 | 14 | | Bite | 4 | 30 + 7 | 3D4 + 8D6 |
| INT 5 | 5 | | Ink | 2 | 80 + 7 | Special |
| DEX 3D6 + 6 | 16-17 | | | | | |

| Hit Location | Melee(D20) | Missile(D20) | Points | Armor: A tough, fibrous outer skin for |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tentacle #1 | 1 | 1 | 4/5 | 4 points on all parts of its body |
| Tentacle #2 | 2 | 2 | 4/5 | |
| Tentacle #3 | 3 | 3 | 4/5 | |
| Tentacle #4 | 4 | 4 | 4/5 | |
| Tentacle #5 | 5 | 5 | 4/5 | |
| Tentacle #6 | 6 | 6 | 4/5 | |
| Tentacle #7 | 7 | 7 | 4/5 | |
| Tentacle #8 | 8 | 8 | 4/5 | |
| Left arm | 9-12 | 9-11 | 4/8 | |
| Right arm | 13-16 | 12-14 | 4/8 | |
| Body | 17-20 | 15-20 | 4/12 | |

# On The House - Popular House Rules for AD&D

**By Stephen Fulleman**

"Igor died again? This is ridiculous. If Cedric was not 9th level, we would never be able to afford this. The next time Tony gets his character killed, I swear, he is paying for the raise dead himself."

Does this sound like your game? As a DM , it gets tempting to plot against the lives of high level clerics, just so death can become a real threat again. The rules say that nobody can be raised more than their constitution score, but this limit is hard to keep track of, and is widely ignored. In this article we will look at some house rules contributed by several game clubs, written with this problem in mind.

1) The deity of the cleric casting the spell should evaluate the PC to be raised. Is he or she a follower in good standing? If not, are they willing to change? This can cause a clash of ideologies within the group, as the cleric tries to "Convert the Infidel". PS: Remember to apply level penalties and class restrictions for those who must change alignments.

2) Have the PC fulfill a quest for the cleric's deity as the price of the spell. If the PC has not completed the last quest given him/her, then they cannot come back.

3) The most drastic solution of all: Determine how many levels that PC had, counting all classes by whichever rule you use. Somewhere the cleric must come up with enough levels to replace those that were lost when the PC died. These can be donated by any willing person, through at least one must come from the cleric casting the spell. If the party is unable, or unwilling to meet this price in full, then the PC will come back with however many levels the party was able to give. Note that unwilling victims can be used, if sacrificed in full ceremony, but each gives only half of his/hers/its levels (fractions rounded down). This is a decidely evil act, and will move any and all participants towards the evil alignment.

**FUN SPELLS**

In addition to the more serious aspects of the game, it is sometimes useful to lighten the mood of the game with a bit of pure fun. The following spells and spell-like abilities were also contributed by members of local game clubs:

**Protection From Self**

Level: 3
Class: Any
Casting Time: 1 Turn
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 Day
Range: Touch
Area Of Effect: Caster
Saving Throw: None

When a protection from self spell is casted, it entitles the PC to a special immunity: It makes them partially immune to the stupidity of the player running them. When the player calls for some particularly stupid or suicidal action, the DM will ask "Are you sure you want to do that?". This gives the player a chance to reconsider, possibly saving his/her PC's life. This protection lasts one game day, or until used, whichever comes first. (Of course, the PC's who most need this spell will never cast it.)

**Dispel Nonsense**

Level: N/A
Class: Any
Casting Time: 1 Segment
Components: V
Duration: Special
Range: Special
Area Of Effect: One Game Table
Saving Throw: Neg.

This is the ability to re-invoke **D&D** (or other applicable RPG) when it has been disrupted by exceptional distraction, side conservations, natural catastrophe, etc. To cast it, the PC simply intones the magic words "Dispel Nonsense". The other PC's get a saving throw, based on how loud and forceful the casting was. Note that the consequences of a successful save may include the death of the game session. If the DM casts this particular spell, PC had better hope that they are affected, or the effects may be unpredictable. There are more potent forms of this spell, which include more colorful terms for the distractions being dispelled.

**SERIOUS SPELLS**

This section includes a few more serious rule adjustments, designed to correct the unbalancing effects of some of the new **UA** spells and rule adjustments.

**Sepia Snake Sigil:** This spell is a third level version of **Imprison**, which is normally an eighth level spell. The only major difference is that **Imprison** not only freezes the victim in time, it also buries him/her/it. With **Sepia Snake Sigil**, you have to provide your own shovel. Many game groups change this spell to allow a save. Others make it a 5th level spell, instead of a 3rd. Both of these are workable solutions.

**Mirage Arcane:** This is an 8th level version of a cantrip, and is notably weaker than the 1st level illusionist spell, **Phantasmal Force**. Although **Mirage Arcane** does include auditory illusion, it is restricted in the types of illusions it can create (distance and movement distortions only). For this reason many gamers ignore the spell completely. If you are powerful enough to cast it, why would you pick such a feeble spell? Make it a 2nd level spell, and it becomes worthwhile.

**WEAPON SPECIALIZATION**

The weapon specialization rules introduced in **UA** are severly unbalancing. 1st level PC's find that they can kill the average 1st level monster in a single blow. This

is not bad from the PC's point of view, but it means that the DM must either send more monsters, or bigger ones, to make a good fight. This means that PC's gain ***alot*** more experience, and your can turn Monty Haul-ish very easily. If you try to balance the game by allowing a few of the monsters to have weapon specialization, then you will increase the body count in the battle, and players will get upset: It is fun to kill monsters on a single blow, but its no fun to be killed by a monster on his first swing. The game degenerates into a contest of initiatives.

Consider an alternate scheme of weapon skill: Multiple weapon proficiency as the key. Each additional proficiency you invest in a single weapon gives you a + 1 to hit with that weapon. Thus a fighter, who starts with 3 weapon proficiencies, may invest 2 in swordplay (giving him a + 1 with sword), and the third in bow. If all 3 were invested in swordplay, then he would be at + 2 with his sword, but would not know how to use any other weapon. Specialization of this type could be done whenever a character earned a new proficiency.

# DRAGONS: A New Look At An Old Foe

**By Stephen Fulleman**

Dragons, as they appear in mythology, are among the most fearsome creatures men have ever faced. As they appear in the **AD&D** Monster Manuals, they are among the most severely underpowered creatures around. This a strange, since they appear to have every advantage. They get three attacks a round, massive hit points, a respectable armor class, a tremendously powerful breath weapon, and even have their own special rules for saving throws, yet still we see parties of adventurers shouting with glee when they find one, and counting their share of the treasure even before the battle starts. What's worse is that, all too often, their optimism proves justified. Something is very, very wrong.

A good DM can make a dragon quite dangerous, and a bad one can make one unstoppable (all he has to do is ignore the rules), yet still they seem to be missing the point. Dragons are creatures of power, on all levels. Adding extra hit points or extra magic can partially solve the problem, but that just makes the battle last longer, without really changing the outcome. Ideally an assault on a dragon should be a serious enough undertaking that it is almost an adventure in itself, and one not to be taken lightly.

Strangely, part of the problem lies within these special strengths of the dragon, some of which are also weaknesses. For example, the trademark of the dragon is its breath weapon. These weapons are dangerous, yet reveal much about the dragon: The first time a dragon breathes, the party knows just how tough this particular dragon is, and that the dragon's breath attacks, and days, are numbered. A dragon's size would seem like a tremendous advantage, yet the dragon gets little benefit from it, and many problems. A thief, attacking from behind, can do immense damage to a dragon, with little risk, since the dragon can be harmed by its own breath, and has no way to reach back there. A group of adventurers can surround a dragon and all attack at the same time, but there are no rules for the dragon taking advantage of its size by rolling or pouncing on opponents.

A dragon gets three attacks a round, yet a normal man with a non-magical long sword can do more damage than a dragon's claws: The average shop-keeper (1 hit dice, 4.5 hit points) can withstand the average dragon's claw attack (1D6, 3.5 points). In short, a halfling with a short sword does as much damage as a dragons claws. Human fighters get a damage bonus for strength, yet a dragon, which is many times stronger than a man, does not.

Dragons can use spells (sometimes), yet are subject to so many attacks at once that the spells are unlikely to go off (spells are ruined whenever damage is taken).

Here are a few suggestions regarding dragons, which can make them tougher without making them unbeatable:

1) Dragons take 1/2 damage from weapons smaller than a long sword, with fractions rounded *down,* due to its incredible size (a dagger to us is a pin-prick to him).

2) Dragons do not take multiple damage from thieves back-stabbing since s dragon's vital organs are not located in the same places as are those of humanoids, and even if the thief knows their locations, they are probably out of reach.

3) Dragons usually flap their wings in combat, top blow dust and sand in an opponent's face, extinguishes torches or open flames, and to allow the dragon greater mobility, reducing its armor class by 4.

4) Dragons can sweep with their tails, doing damage equal to their bite, and covering an area equal to the dragon's hit dice, in inches(feet).

5) Dragons can use their breath attacks many times a day, doing any amount of damage per blast that the dragon chooses, up to the dragon's hit points. The total amount of breath damage done in a day may not exceed 3 times the dragon's total hit point 6) Dragons receive a damage bonus to their claw and bite attacks (but not the tail attack) of 2 points per hit dice that the dragon has.

7) Dragons may cast spells, even if they have taken damage in the round they are casting in, if they can roll higher than the damage taken, on a D20.

8) Dragons dropping on people do 1D10 per hit dice of the dragon, with a save vs. petrification for half damage (dex bonuses apply, as do wisdom bonuses). The dragon will take half this amount as falling damage, save vs. death magic for half.

9) Dragons may use protective magic items from their hoard.

10) Dragons are immune to their own personal breath weapon (but not those of other dragons).

Also, consider the types of spells that a dragon might choose. It is completely unreasonable to think that something as huge as a dragon, radiating an aura of fear, could use a charm person or friends spell with any effectiveness. More likely, the dragon will choose spells to augment its natural strengths, or take advantage of its opponents weaknesses.

For example, protection from good would make its already tough hide even harder to penetrate, and darkness would give it tremendous advantages over just about anything (dragons can detect hidden or unseen opponents by smell and sound). Magic missile could be used to foil spell casters attacking the dragon, and ray of enfeeblement would take alot of sting out of overly strong fighters. Jump is devastating, since it allows the dragon to leap up to 30 feet in the air, and land safely: Think of a moving van dropping on your party, and you will get the idea. Affect normal fires can be used to minimize the effects of flaming oil, or can flare torches and burn them out, leaving the party in darkness. Invisibility would give the dragon time to cast his protection or detection spells, and detect magic would warn it about the most dangerous opponents (at least, those with the most weapons).

The possible uses for spells are endless, but do not equip your dragon with a spell unless you know what it uses that particular for.

As a final note, remember that dragons fly, and will leave a battle rather than die defending a treasure hoard, which they know can be replaced. Dragons are also vengeful, and will return another day, better prepared and angry beyond belief! Better not mess with them at all, which is the way it should be with dragons.

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# Morality: A new Gauge for Roleplaying Characters

By Michael DeWolfe

Some roleplaying games try to rate the personalities of player's and NPC's; D&D's alignment system is the basis for this idea. The systems used for rating characters are useful in the respect that they remind the player just what type of character he is playing. Rating systems stops players from doing one thing; changing their character's personalities for the sake of convenience.

However, most systems seem to give players a feeling of "clausterphobia"; they feel limited and constricted. So what some games need is a rating system that does not restrict but still is an accurate gauge or guide. Hopefully, this is where the system comes in. This system, ***Morality*** is as generic as possible to allow its use in all roleplaying games without greatly altering their rules.

The morality system is based on a scale from 0 to 100 with 50 being average. Scores above 50 being average. Scores above 50 define a character as being moralistic, honorable and unlikely to commit an act of violence. Scores below 50 define a character as being inmoralistic, without great care for others and likely to perform violent actions. When a player chooses a character's morality, he can define it as anything from 10 to 90. Of course, he should take into account social status, intelligence, and wisdom related characteristics. Intelligent, wise and socially elevated characters are not often the type to walk about slashing up trouble makers, pillaging towns and lying through their teeth to simply avoid a conservation (evil masterminds are the almost obvious exception). Stupid, unwise and destitute characters, however, are more likely to. Evil characters would rarely have morality scores above 40, while good characters rarely have scores below 60. The character should have a reason why he is the way he is.

Next, characters should have the ability to change over time. The morality value they choose at the time they take on their character is set and cannot be permanently changed through choice. So, the GM should monitor what the character does and do 2 things: First, if the player acts too far out of character, he should be told so, and if they do act out of character, the actions should be noted. The former is to keep the character the way the player chose it to be. The latter is so that if a character commits 2 consecutive moral (or amoral) acts there should be a choice that his morality is altered. This is only brought into play if the character does 2 moral things one after the other, or if he does 2 amoral acts. An amoral act is defined as robbery, lying, an unprovoked attack, etc. A moral act is considered as being something like helping someone anonymous out of danger or being fair to someone. Acts like walking up stairs or reading a book are neither moral nor amoral and would not classify as either. So, if a moral character (Morality 60) lies to an authority, does nothing else conflicting with morality for a week, then punches someone to make them submit, the character then qualifies for having his morality lowered. Stability is a rating from 1 to 5. 1 states that a character changes readily. 5 states that a character is very resistant to change. To find out whether or not a character changes, use a percentile dice roll matched against the morality score. If the roll is greater than the score, then the change has occured. Stability defines how many times you must this check for a single alteration to be registered; 3 rolls are average for average characters, 2 for less stable characters, and so on. By how much morality it is lowered is gauged the decision of the gamemaster. The average amount would be from 1 to 4 or 1D4, if gauged randomly.

Stability can be only permanently altered through mental disease, if your game has this aspect to its rules. Morality can also be permanently altered by psychics.

Below is a morality sheet that can be used players. To use this sheet, circle a character's permanent stability and morality either in red pencil or with a square pencil pattern. Then mark off temporary changes with a circle or black pencil marks.

Characters should also be allowed to act as if they are more or less moral than they actually are. This can be achieved, temporarily, through bluffing, acting, or the use of charisma. The process a player should use is as follows: First, find the check that should be used, whether it is charisma, fast talk, presence, appearance, or whatever; next, successfully make the roll against this ability; if successful, the character is allowed to temporarily alter his morality by 5. If the player wishes his character to be even more different, he can make another ability check to alter again by 5. Such can continue until the character has altered his morality by thirty or to the rating of 0 or 1 hundred; any critical successes with ability checks allow the limit to be raised by another 5 to a limit of 60. This change remains in place until of three things occur: Until the character ends his encounter with the one(s) he wishes to bluff; until twenty minutes of time have elapsed, or until he is surprised or shocked by something like a shocking event or revelation.

Example: If a **Runequest** character (Morality 40) wishes to behave well with a respected figure (Morality 65), he would have to make 5 fast talk rolls. 4 are successful and the last one fails, so he poses as a character (Morality 60), of slightly weaker moral fiber the the respected figure. After a short and boring conversation, the respected figure walks away; the character's morality is rated again at 40. When they again meet, the character must attempt 5 fast talk rolls again to behave on an equal status.

If a player changes his character's personality, it will show in character interaction. Degenerate characters will have to try to act different around normal and moral non-player characters; and the same is true in reverse. The system should not be used to bind a character, it should allow choice and change.

## *MORALITY SHEET*

**PLAYER** _____

**CHARACTER** _____

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMORALITY** | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 |
| 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 |
| 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 66 | 67 |
| 68 | 69 | 70 | 71 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 79 | 80 | 81 |
| 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 |
| | | | | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 100 | **MORALITY** | | | | |

**UNSTABLE** 1 2 3 4 5 **STABLE**


## *MORALITY SHEET*

**PLAYER** _____

**CHARACTER** _____

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AMORALITY** | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 |
| 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 |
| 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 66 | 67 |
| 68 | 69 | 70 | 71 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 77 | 78 | 79 | 80 | 81 |
| 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 |
| | | | | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 100 | **MORALITY** | | | | |

**UNSTABLE** 1 2 3 4 5 **STABLE**



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# Magic Gone Astray

by Joseph A. Nowak, Jr.

A party of adventurers journey through a dusty, old, torch-lit, and apparently deserted cave. Suddenly, they come upon a contingent of bugbears, led by the evil human magician, Ralthos. Instantly, adventurers and bugbears assume battle positions and the fight is on.

Ogma, the magic user, is standing off to the right and decides to fire a magic missile at Ralthos, figuring that if he knocks out the magic user, the bugbears will run scared. Meldor, the archer, is standing off to the left and decides to try the same thing with a more conventional missile. Ozegar the Meek, always the defensive type, decides to put up his shield first. Talazar, a fighter/magic user, likes to jump right into the center of the battle. He uses his jump spell and expects to land on one of the bugbears on the way down. Rolge, the assassin, sprinkles some dust of invisibility on herself and plans to sneak in at least one death blow before becoming visible. Joruz plans to use the rod of polymorph she found on a previous adventure to turn into a stone giant and scare off the enemy.

Our party of adventurers would appear to have the situation well in hand. Victory seems imminent. Not quite. But we'll come back to them later.

In many **AD&D** adventures magic is assumed to work correctly. Oh, occasionally, one of the bad guys makes a saving throw, but for the most part, if a spell is cast, it does what it's supposed to do. This occasionally leaves the DM in a quandary as to how to create reasonable battle foes for the party. Maybe a very old and wise red dragon could wipe them out, but dragons are very rare. What to do? Allow the party to defeat itself.

Magic is like a delicate flower. It must be handled with care or it might just fall apart. There are many ways in which magic can work agaisnt the user who casts first and thinks later.

The DM must first prepare himself by studying the attributes of the spells and magic items being used by the party. Does the spell or artifact have any weakness or shortcoming? How long does the spell take to cast? Is the character able to carry around an adequate supply of the physical component of the spell? Is this spell a reversible one? What defenses exist for this spell? What are the limitations? Let's explore some of the possibilities.

We have all learned that magic missiles are pretty potent weapons. They always hit their target. Is there any way to defend against such an item? The greatly unused shield spell will stop magic missiles, or any missile for that matter. Charm spells cast against a magic resistant creature will fail miserably. For every offensive spell or weapon there is a defense. Find it. Use it.

Many of the spells, as described in the **AD&D Players Handbook**, have a reverse aspect. The first level cleric bless spell is reversible and can be a curse spell as well. Let's say, for example, the cleric is in the process of blessing the troops before the battle when the party is suddenly set upon by a advance squad of the enemy. In a frenzy to finish the spell, the cleric accidentally reaches for the specially polluted water instead of grabbing the holy water. A curse spell instead of the desired blessing spell has been cast. Factors to be considered in making this decision: What level is the cleric? Has he/she seen battle before? How has the character preformed in the past? Is he/she accident prone? The possibilities for accidental reversal spells abound.

Become aware of the limitations of spells. Casting time, spell duration and physical components represent information that should be a part of every DM's bag of tricks.

A 3rd level cleric dispel magic spell takes 6 segments to cast. A magic missile fired at the same cleric can be cast in only 1 segment. Too often, players and DM's alike forget about casting time.

Duration of the spell is another consideration. A 4th level magic user casts a flame arrow spell on 4 arrows of a compatriot. These arrows must be fired within 1 round or they will be consumed by flame. If the archer is attacked at close quarters after firing only 2 of the arrows, becoming involved in a rather pitched battle that takes 9 more segments, a fiery surprise will await him in his quiver. His quiver and remaining supply of arrows will be destroyed in the process. Burns to the archer himself may also occur.

A 3rd level magic user is attacked by a band of brigands on a mountain road. Thinking he will escape the villains, the magic user steps off the side of the mountain looking forward to a 1000 foot drop. He casts a feather fall spell and expects to land ever so lightly. He has forgotten that feather fall lasts for only 1 segment per level. At third level that may take him to about 750 feet before the feather fall gives out. It would be better to free fall to perhaps 200 or 300 feet before casting the spell. Otherwise...

Soot, salt, phosphorus, greater mistletoe, grasshopper legs, and oak bark -- these are all material components of various spells. It always amazes me how spells requiring such components always seem to be cast with such ease. What's more, magic users never seem to run out of these components. They always have the necessary ingredients close at hand.

The jump spell requires a grasshopper leg. A good magic user would gather his own grasshopper legs. But a magic user that is continually adventuring could be lured into a magic supply shop in town and simply purchase a jar of grasshopper legs. An unethical shopkeeper might substitute some cricket legs into the batch. What

happens when a jump spell is used with cricket legs? A shorter jump? The magic user begins to chirp like a cricket uncontrollably? Nothing? The DM decides.

Greater mistletoe is the most effective druid spell component. It must be harvested on Midsummer's Eve by the druid who will use it. Any ,mistletoe gathered at any other time is not as effective. If the druid borrows some other druid's mistletoe, it will be less effective. Holly and oak leaves are acceptable substitutes for mistletoe, but are much less effective. This means that a druid must plan on harvesting enough mistletoe in one night to last him an entire year. When a druid becomes a member of the party, it is a good idea to consider whether or not he had planned on adventuring at the time of the annual mistletoe harvest. If this is unplanned, the druid might not have enough mistletoe to last more than a month or two. This would require him to use some of the less effective substitutes and hence spells cast would be less effective. (For more information on this subject, see Notes Regarding Druid Spells in the **AD&D Player's Handbook**.)

There are some real world physical limitations involved in the use of some spells. If you shoot a gun at a boulder, the bullet will not simply stop and fall to the ground when it hits the rock. It will bounce off or ricochet. The same is true when a missile hits a shield or wall at an angle. This can often cause injury to the missile launcher's or the shield bearer's own party.

If a player decides to throw a shocking grasp spell a good dousing with water or accidental contact with some metal could conceivably cause a reversal of the jolt. The player gets the shock or at least short circuited.

In the **AD&D Player's Handbook**, spells either work or they don't work. However, if you feel up to a little variation, an error in the incantation can be quite amusing. If you have a character that is constantly sipping at the vine -- he drinks too much wine -- his slurred speech pattern could cause a spell to be totally ineffective. Some players are nervous and hyper during battles. To cast a spell takes great concentration. It is very difficult to concentrate in the middle of a battlefield. It is certainly conceivable that they might make an error in the spell to be used.

Magic items seldom contain unlimited charges. Yet time after time, a character will use a ring of invisibility. In many cases the ring is found in the course of adventuring. The power of invisibility is discovered and then it is used over and over and over and over.... It never fails and it never seems to run out of charges. Unless a player is extremely skilled at detecting magic, it is very possible that the last invisibility charge in the ring was used at the point of discovery. It may be defective and work sometimes and not others. Keep track of a player's use of such artifacts. If they get too dependent on a particular artifact, cut them off.

The ever popular bag of holding is a joy to behold. But what's to stop the near miss of a sword thrust from cutting a small and unnoticed hole in such a bag tied to the belt of a fighter character? Small jewels, jewelry, or gold dust could fall out of the bag and the player might not notice the loss for days. These things do happen.

Let's get back to our trusty band of adventurers and see what they're up to.

Meldor, the archer, had fired an arrow at Ralthos, the evil magician. Ralthos has thrown a shield spell. The arrow hits the shield at just the right angle and ricochets directly into the left leg of Ogma, the magician. Ogma had fired a magic missile at Ralthos. His was not a total loss. For he fired just a moment after Meldor fired the arrow. True, his missile also ricocheted, but it was at that moment that Brrowl, the bugbear charged forward. He was totally unprepared for the magic missile that hit him from behind. (Sometimes the unexpected positive results can make the play more interesting.)

Ozegar, the Meek, cast his shield spell as well. Ozegar is a rather large fellow. He eats too much. He always eats his food too fast and frequently suffers from hiccups. During the casting of his shield spell he hiccupped. After casting the shield spell he put his hand forward to see if the shield spell worked and found the solid shield before him. You can understand his surprise when the bugbear hammer came flying directly through the center of the shield hitting him in the stomach and knocking the wind out of him. The hiccup had effectively placed a nice hole in the center of his shield.

Talazar cast his jump spell but forgot one very important factor. To travel 20 or 30 feet horizontally, one must travel a certain distance vertically as well. The cave ceiling was far too low for this spell. Talazar suddenly saw stars. He knew this was most unusual because he was in a cave. At least he thought he was.

Rolge's invisibility powder was recently purchased from an unscrupulous peddlar in town. Oh, it works for 2, sometimes 4 segments. Then, forget it. At 3 segments, Rolge turned visible. Let's not talk about the results.

Joruz's rod of polymorph had been used once too often in the past. It was at that moment that Joruz discovered that the rod had run out of charges. It did make a pretty good battle staff however -- a use for which she had great need of.

Killing off the player characters is not the goal of the DM. But when players begin to rely too heavily on their magic and not enough on their wits, it is time for them to be taught the limitations of the world of magic. All spells have a weakness. Find them. Let the players know that you are aware of those weaknesses. A more exciting game will be had by all.

# Gloranthan Metals

By Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen

*The following is an preview of an upcoming **Runequest** product. **SGIFG** would like to thank **Chaosium** for this material - Ed.*

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## Introduction

Glorantha is not Earth, and the metals named in print as "bronze", "iron", "gold", and so forth, are analogues, not duplicates, of earthly metals.

The following is a First Age document written by the Seshnegi sorcerer-prince Bertalor, later Duke of Fromalwal. Inserts by a later commentator - the early God Learner Tojarinor of Isefwal - are signified by brackets [ ].

## The Metals of Acos

Like everything else on Acos [an old Seshnegi term for the universe], the metals of the world depend for their quality upon the 9. Each of the 9 has his own representative metal, with the qualities of that metal being the same as the god's personality-functions, with some changes due to the presence of all these metals within the body of Gata [the Seshnegi used this term both for the primal earth-goddess and the physical substance of the earth itself].

**Ur**-metal is the metal of **Urtiam** [Seshnegi name for Mostal]. The metal is hard to master, being subject only to the most complicated and difficult spells. Possession of an artifact of this metal among those not possessing everyday intercourse with the immortals is rare, and no mortal can consistently forge the metal.

**Na**-metal is the metal of Nakala [darkness]. In color, it is black to gray, depending on its purity. It is easy to work, just as easy to get help from Nakala, although the price for help is greater than the price of na-metal.

**Sa**-metal is Sramak's metal. Just as Sramak is the god of the sea, **Sa**-metal is liquid, flowing. In color it is green, Sramak's color. Among the surface dwellers it has little use, except among the magicians.

**Gata's** metal, **Ga**-metal, is shiny brown and is the most common metal widely used in Acos. Soft in its common state, it can be charmed into hardness like other metals. (Stone is also called **Gata's** metal, although it is more akin to her bones.)

**Ze**-metal is the metal of **Zrethus** [Seshnegi term for Dayzatar]. It is blue-silver in color, the shade depending on its purity, the more blue the purer. It is soft and pliable in its natural state.

**Lo**-metal is the metal of Lodril, the fire-god. Just as fire is the lightest element, this too is the lightest metal. It is red in color, like fire. This is a much coveted metal for weapons, being light but firm, second in desirability only to ur-metal. This stems from Lodril's purity.

**Uleria's** metal is called **Ul**-metal. It is pliable and soft, like a lover I suppose. [Poor fellow] It is white in color, and like the other metals can be charmed into hardness. It is very hard to tame, like **Ur**-metal, its brother [this refers to the Seshnegi belief that Uleria and Mostal were brother and sister], and may unexpectedly change back to soft.

**Humakt's** metal is a cross between **Gata's** and **Zrethus'**. It is a heavy and dependable metal, strong and warlike. It wields itself better into weapons, just as Humakt is an excellent war-god. It rivals, and may even surpass, **Ga**-metal as the predominant metal of Acos. It is called **Bu**-metal.

**Ehilm's** metal is yellow in color, it is soft and pliable at first, and strong charms are necessary for it to be suitable for arms and armor. The only people to successfully use the el-metal in great amounts for weapons are the Galanini, the descendants and devout worshipers of Ehilm.

These metals are use for many purposes, the first being arms and armor. [Here Bertalor's own predictions show through.] Their value as money varies in different areas, depending primarily upon the major deity in the area.

The earthly, mundane, equivalents to Gloranthan metals are given below:

ur-metal = iron
na-metal = lead
sa-metal = mercury (aluminum)
ga-metal = copper
ze-metal = tin
lo-metal = aluminum (mercury)
ul-metal = silver
el-metal = gold
hu-metal = bronze

## Game Rules

All these metals can be enchanted, giving them special magic properties. All exceptional metals are often titled Rune Metals, to distinguish them from ordinary bronze. Many cults know the common divine spell of Enchant metal. The exact metal(s) enchanted vary from cult to cult.

**NOMINAL VALUES FOR RAW (UNECHANTED) METALS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Aluminum: | 40 per ENC |
| Bronze: | 7 per ENC |
| Copper: | 5 per ENC |
| Gold: | 600 per ENC |
| Iron: | 700 per ENC |
| Lead: | 1 per ENC |
| Quicksilver: | 40 per ENC |
| Silver: | 50 per ENC |
| Tin: | 15 per ENC |

The prices given for the various metals are only a rough approximation for Glorantha as a whole, and differ greatly from place to place. Seshnela, for instance, historically has had the world's greatest concentration of iron, and this wonderful metal is less expensive there. On the other hand, the barbaric inhabitants of the Wastes do not even smelt bronze; iron to them is unbelievably rare and costly.

**MAGIC PROPERTIES OF GLORANTHAN METALS**

**ALUMINUM:** See under Quicksilver.

**BRONZE** (hu-metal) is the most important metal of Glorantha. It can mined in its own right, or made by alloying ga-metal and ze-metal. No Enchant rituals for it are common, but normal non-magic forging makes prefectly serviceable weapons, tools, and armor. Bronze originates from the bones of deities slain in the Gods War. On rare occasions, a piece of bronze is still found that retains is former bone-like shape. These are highly prized and sometimes have magic properties. Unfortunately, they are also easily faked.

**COPPER** (ga-metal) has the same ENC as normal bronze. When mixed with a bit of tin (ze-metal), Gloranthan bronze is created. Unenchanted copper armor and weapons are sometimes made. Raw copper armor has equal armor points to bronze, but loses an armor point each time it is penetrated. Raw copper weapons have equal armor points to bronze, but cannot damage bronze weapons. Enchanted copper armor and weapons are especially solid, and such weapons only lose armor points in combat when penetrated for twice their value. For instance, over 16 points of damage would be needed before an enchanted copper buckler would lose any armor points. However, all damage over 8 points would go through to the wielder. Enchanted copper armor can be hammered very thin and still retain some solidity. This reduces the armor's defensive value by 2 points, but halves its ENC. Thus, a medium suit of plate armor would have 6 armor points and weigh 12.5 ENC.

**GOLD** (el-metal) has twice the ENC of bronze. When enchanted, it glows softly in the dark and doubles the effectiveness of light-producing spells cast on it. Thus, a Light spell cast on golden armor would fill an area 20 meters in diameter. Since gold is so heavy and costly, most people wishing to make use of gold's special properties simply gild bronze armor.

**IRON** (ur-metal) has supernatural properties even unenchanted. When enchanted, iron weapons have half again the armor points of bronze. A bronze broadsword has 10 armor points, but a tempered iron broadsword has 15 armor points. Iron armor also has half again the protection of bronze armor, rounding fractions down, so that iron plate armor is worth 12 points of protection at no increase in ENC.

Unenchanted iron had the same physical qualities as bronze. However, it also affects magic. Untempered iron reduces the chance of both casting and being affected by a spell by 5 percentiles per point of ENC.

Certain of the elder races are vulnerable to iron. Any damage from an iron weapon to an elf or troll (and some of their kindred races) that penetrates armor is doubled.

**LEAD** (na-metal) has half-again the ENC of bronze. This soft, dull metal neither clanks or reflects, so lead armor never detracts from the user's Stealth skills. Lead formed into crushing weapons (only) does +2 damage. Thus, a light mace made of enchanted lead would do 1d8 + 2 damage. A war maul would do 1d10 + 4.

**QUICKSILVER** (sa-metal) and **ALUMINUM** (lo-metal) are actually the same metal in two forms, despite Bertalor's speculations and Earthly metallurgy. A successful Craft Quicksilver roll can transform either form into the other. When enchanted, this metal gains the property that it does not sink in water. The Swim skill of an individual wearing quicksilver armor is not decreased at all. The metal's ENC is equal to bronze; its affinity for water is supernatural.

**SILVER** (ul-metal) enhanted or unenchanted, has the special property that it can damage creatures normally affected only by magic, such as werewolves and wraiths. Unenchanted silver is quite soft, and as a weapon is only suitable for bludgeons or sling pellets.

**TIN** (ze-metal) is not often enchanted. When a small quantity of ze-metal is alloyed with ga-metal, Gloranthan bronze is produced. Most ze-metal is used for this purpose.

**DIVINE MAGIC**

Enchant metal
1 point
Ritual Enchant, reusable

This ritual must be performed over the specific Rune metal it is designed for, and 1 point of POW sacrificed for each 10 ENC or fraction thereof of the metal enchanted. The metal should be forged (with a Craft/Smith skill roll) into the desired form before this spell is cast, for reforging enchanted metal cancels the enchantment. The metal always gains armor point equal to those of bronze (except in the case of iron), and may gain other special abilities, depending on the metal.

**SORCERY**

Enchant metal
Ritual Enchant

This ritual must be performed over the specific Rune metal it is designed for, and a point of POW sacrificed for each 10 ENC or

fraction thereof of the metal. The intensity of the spell must be equal or exceed the metal's total ENC. The metal should be forged (with a Craft/Smith skill roll) into the desired form before this spell is cast, for reforging enchanted metal cancels the enchantment. The metal always gains armor points equal to those of bronze (except in the case of iron), and may gain other special abilities, depending on the metal.

**GLORANTHAN DEITIES POSSESSING ENCHANT METAL**

Aldrya: Enchant Copper
Argan Argar: Enchant Lead
Asrelia: Enchant Copper
Babeester Gor: Enchant Copper, Enchant Iron
City Gods: Varies with cult, usually none.
East Isles Gods: Varies with cult, usually none.
Ernalda: Enchant Copper
Gorgorma: Enchant Iron
Humakt: Enchant Iron
Invisible God: Sorcerous Enchant Iron
Kyger Litor: Enchant Lead
Lhankor Mhy: Enchant Iron
Lodril: Enchant Copper, Enchant Gold, Enchant Iron, Enchant Lead, Enchant Tin
Magasta: Enchant Quicksilver
Maran Gor: Enchant Iron
Mostal: All sorcerous enchant metal spells.
Orlanth: Enchant Iron, Enchant Silver
Red Goddess: Enchant Iron and Enchant Silver from associate cults
River Gods: Enchant Quicksilver
Seven Mothers: Enchant Iron and Enchant Silver from associate cults
Storm Bull: Enchant Iron
Subere: Enchant Lead
Tasankth: Enchant Iron
Ty Kora Tek: Enchant Copper
Uleria: Enchant Silver
Wachaza: Enchant Iron, Enchant Quicksilver
Yelm: Enchant Gold, Enchant Iron
Yelmalio: Enchant Gold, Enchant Iron
Zorak Zoram: Enchant Lead


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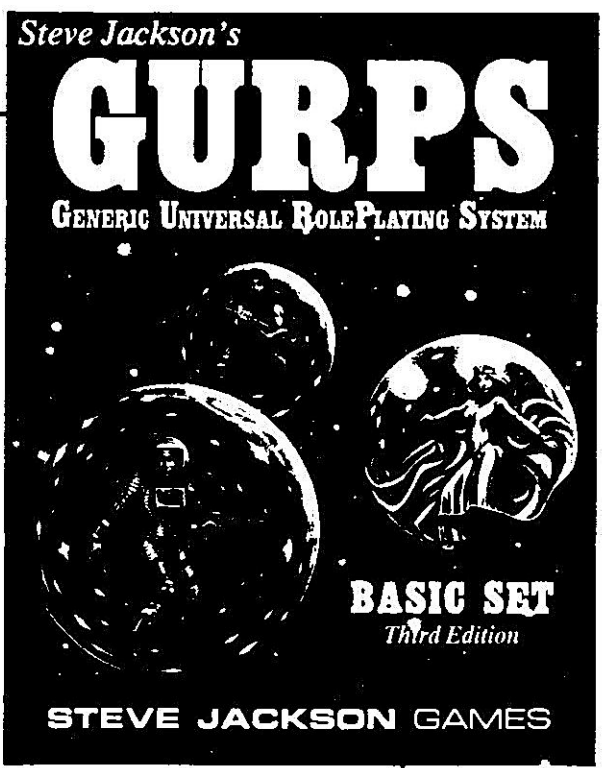


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# The Spy Character Class for Stormbringer

**By Michael Jarrell**

The Young Kingdoms. A land of princes, kings, dukes, and barons. In this world there is a constant web of intrigues being woven. Where there is power there will always be power seekers and a wise man once said, "Knowledge is power". To gain knowledge, and the resulting power, one must have information. The information a person needs is dependent on the type of power that one seeks. Sorcerous power can be gained by acts as simple as reading a book or summoning a demon of knowledge. But true power in the Young Kingdoms is political. A king or emperor has absolute power in his domain but he still requires knowledge and information. The same goes for those who are lower on the political ladder, especially if they wish to rise to a higher level. To gather their information, they use many sources. But for indepth information they always turn to their loyal, and expensive, servant....the spy.

Serving any master who has the gold to meet, or her, price, they travel about the world and gather the knowledge that others seek. Living in constant jeopardy, the spy goes where he will and takes what he must. Their lives are forfeit if they fail, but the rewards often outweight the dangers they must face. This is the life of the Young Kingdoms most unknown character class. Introduced here, and nowhere else, for your gaming pleasure.....the spy character class for **Stormbringer**.

In designing this new character class, I ran up against quite a few obstacles. Would it be a character class or a sub-class? Sure, they are a lot like the thief and the assassin, but not quite the same. I decided, in the end, that the spy should be a free floating character class. What this means in game terms is that **ANY** character class has a percentage chance of being a spy. Characters should roll normally for their character class and take all the skills and abilities that go with it. What this means, essentially, is that the spy character class tends to be just a bit better than the average **Stormbringer** character. Fortunately, this doesn't upset the balance of the game. Why? Simple. The life span of successful spies tends to be short. The sentence for spying in most of the Young Kingdoms carries the death penalty. (Remember the spies sent to scout out the Meinibonean harbor maze?) So GM's shouldn't worry about balance of play where these guys are concerned. Spy characters will tend to lend highly exciting, if short, lives.

This character class will also introduce a few new skills and weapons to the game. This is necessary in a variety of ways and most are essential to the spy. So, without further ado, I introduce to you...the spy.

All characters are generated per the **Stormbringer** rules and roll for a normal character class on table 2.3.1.1. This is the spies "cover" class. If the GM wishes, he may allow his players to state whether they wish to be a spy or not. If this is not desirable, or if the GM wishes to keep the number of spies down to a realistic level, all character classes, (with a few notable exceptions, listed below) have a 10% chance of being a spy. The only exceptions to this are the following classes: Beggar: 15%, Thief: 15%, Noble: 20%, Trader: 20%. (Please note that only lower level nobles will be spies. Higher level nobles hire them.

Spies start the game with the following skills (in addition to the skills provided by their "cover" class):

1. Listen at 25% + perception bonus.
2. Search at 25% + perception bonus.
3. See at 25% + perception bonus.
4. Persuade at 10% + bonuses.
5. Seduction at 25% + communications bonuses.*
6. Evaluate Information at 30% + knowledge bonuses.*
7. Memorize at 30% + knowledge bonuses.
8. Garrote at 30% + weapons bonuses.*
9. Stilleto at 35% + weapons bonuses.*

* = Indicates a new skill or weapon.

1. Seduction: This skill allows a character to seduce a member of the opposite sex. It is a useful skill in that it often allows a spy to gain the information he seeks from another individual without actually risking his or her own life.

2. Evaluate Information: This skill is much the same as evaluate treasure, but it only applies to information. A successful roll will let a character know the top amount he may charge for a particular piece of knowledge, and possibly, who it would be of interest to. Failing this roll could cause a character to consider a piece of worthless info to be of great value and/or vice-versa.

3. Garrote: A garrote is a thin piece of wire or string used to strangle, and in some cases, decapitate a foe. It is highly effective when used from a ambush position. It can be used to parry if it is made of metal wire. It does 1D4 + 2 damage and can be used by any skilled person regardless of STR or DEX. (Please note that the garrote is completely ineffective against foes in plate armor, due to the gorget.)

4. Stilleto: This weapon is a dagger -like knife which is very thin and easily concealed. While it is primarily a thrusting weapon the edges can be sharpened. It is often coated with poison, since it is low damage weapon. The stilleto does 1D4 damage.

Well, this about wraps up the spy. I hope it provides you with as much enjoyment as it has for me. Till next time...may your foot be light and your swordarm quick!

# Experience and Gold Piece Values For New AD&D Magic Items

by Vince Garcia

Sooner of later, almost all GM's add a spice to their **AD&D** campaigns through the insertion of one or more unique magic items of their own creation. A problem that results from this, however, is placing an experience and gold piece value on the creation in a reasonable and consistent manner. Take, for instance, the case of an object which duplicates the powers of an official **AD&D** magic item, but in another form. Would the experience and gold piece values remain unchanged? In some circumstances, perhaps not. In others, the uniqueness of the form and its superiority or inferiority to the configuration of the standard item may well increase or decrease both value factors. A belt of invisibility, for example, might well be more desirable than the ring, for in spite of the many beneficial rings, a character might own and desire to use at the same time, he can, after all, wear but two simultaneously. Magical belts, on the other hand, are extremely rare, and the usefulness of a belt negating the requirement of a ring to fulfill the same function is obvious.

Conversely, some alternate forms of a standard magic item might well be worth less. Anyone may use a ring or belt of invisibility, but a large shield with the same power automatically places a limitation on potential users, and for that reason might prove less valuable than the original ring.

When considering a change of form for a standard **AD&D** magic item, the following suggestions might prove helpful in altering the listed experience and monetary values when the item is created.

*Without limiting potential users, the form replaces a ring which performs the same function:* Experience and value increased by 50%.

*New form replaces non-ring form with ring form, providing no appreciable benefits to characters by doing so:* (example: a brooch of shielding changed to ring form) Experience and value halved.

*New form places limitation on potential users, unlike standard item:* (example: a ring of protection changed to a belt of protection) Experience and value halved.

*New form provides noticeable benefit to user over normal form:* (example: a set of gauntlets of orge power changed into bracelet form) Experience and value doubled.

*New form provides no noticeable benefits or liabilities:* Experience and value remain unchanged.

**GM-Created Magic Items**

Another option that the GM may exercise is to combine the function of two or more standard magic items into a single device (for example, a ring of shooting stars additionally functioning as a ring of shocking grasp). Such items would be quite valuable, and a simple formula for determining an increase in value factors would be to add the current values of both standard items (15,000gp and 5,000gp in the former example).

This formula might be modified somewhat under special circumstances such as the following:

*New magic item places a noticeable limitation on potential users:* (example: only usable by particular classes, very cumbersome or bulky, etc.) Halve totaled value factors.

*New magic item very potent and powerful:* (example: a ring of protection + 6 with the further ability of spell turning) Value factors increased by 50%.

*New magic item ridiculously powerful:* (example: an amulet offering the powers of invisibility, giant strength, and vampiric regeneration) Double value factors.

In the case of more unique magic items lacking an obvious parallel amongst standard **AD&D** items, if the function duplicates - or nearly duplicates - a listed **AD&D** spell, the value of the new creation might be calculated by the following formula:

*2,000gp x spell level.* The experience value if the item is retained should be expressed as a percentage of the gold piece value, with a figure of 25% for defensive magic items, 15% for miscellaneous magic items and 10% for offensive magic items safe medians to employ.

The above formula for determining the value of the item represents only the first step. A number of other factors can alter the value up or down, and they are listed below with a suggested modifier. When checking against these modifiers, in the case of a positive result, 1.0 is added, and the values are mulitplied. In the case of a negative result, the penalties are applied to a final maximum of 90%, and this percentage is subtracted from the item's values.

*Number of powers:* A magic item with more than one beneficial power is entitled to a value bonus for each additional power (note that this does not include baneful side-effects, but only those abilities benefitting the user).

Adjustment: + .25 per additional power.

*Restrictions on allowed usage:* Quite a bit falls under this category, starting with listing the item's use to certain classes.

Adjustment: -.25

*Items only usable a limited number of times per day:* (this should not be overlooked as a valuable tool for game balance. A girdle of giant strength, an item few GM's give out as treasure, is relatively innocuous when its usage is limited to 10 rounds per 24-hour period. Likewise, a vorpal sword, another item rarely finding favor with the GM, is a bit more tolerable when it will function thus for only 1D4 rounds per 24-hour period -

and that after, perhaps, a round of inaction to utter a command word)
Adjustment: -.25
*Item has rechargeable charges:* These items typically require a particular spell to recharge on a 1-to-1 basis. If the device is of a type which usually requires charges, the number of charges present can modify its value as shown.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Rods:** | |
| Up to 10 charges: | 0 |
| 11-25 charges: | +.10 |
| 26-40 charges: | +.20 |
| 41-50 charges: | +.50 |
| **Staves:** | |
| Up to 5 charges: | 0 |
| 6-10 charges: | +.10 |
| 11-20 charges: | +.20 |
| 21-25 charges: | +.50 |
| **Wands:** | |
| Up to 25 charges: | 0 |
| 26-50 charges: | +.10 |
| 51-75 charges: | +.20 |
| 76-100 charges: | +.50 |

If the item is of a sort not usually requiring charges, its values are halved.

*Item has non-rechargeable charges:*
Adjustment: -.50

*Item has baneful side-effects:* If a magical device possesses some baneful side-effects, perhaps as a balancing agent, its value lessens, depending on both the number of side-effects and their degree of severity as outlined below.

*Minor side-effects:* Something along these lines would be a small penalty to a certain type of saving throw. Example: A ring offering druidical protection from fire might have as a side-effect the wearer's suffering a -1 to saves against lightning. Or an amulet which allows a saving throw for spells which usually have none might assess the user a -2 penalty to a poison save.
Adjustment: -.10 per effect
*Moderate side-effects:* Side-effects such as these include a small minus to all saving throws; a relatively large penalty to a certain type of saving throw, not exceeding -3; a sentient weapon which causes the wielder to make a saving throw or attack a certain kind of creature regardless of danger, etc.
Adjustment: -.20 per effect
*Severe side-effects:* An intelligent sword which denies the wielder's using another weapon; forces the user into combat without a saving throw; a wand which must make a saving throw whenever used or blow up; a significant penalty to all saving throws; -4 or worse penalty to a certain type of saving throw, etc.
Adjustment: -.50 per effect
*Extremely severe and dangerous side-effect:* it is unusual for anything short of an artifact or relic to possess side-effects of this severity, examples of which are: Automatic failure vs. a certain type of saving throw; user must save vs. magic or lose a level of experience when item's powers are activated; a sentient device which exerts a dangerous amount of control over a user, etc.
Adjustment: -.75 per effect

**GM-Created Artifacts & Relics**

Artifacts and relics have a number of things in common, most notably an affiliation with one or more deities or demigods, and a very high level of power at which they function (usually 18th or higher). If the DM creates objects of these sorts, a simple formula for determining their value is as follows:

*3,000gp x the level of experience at which the device functions + 2,000gp for every beneficial power.*

Unfortunately, baneful side-effects seem to go with hand-in-hand artifacts and relics, and the following adjustments to the value may be applied, based on the severity of these effects:

*Minor side-effects:*
Adjustment: 0
*Moderate side-effects:*
Adjustment: -.05 per effect
*Severe side-effects:*
Adjustment: -.10 per effect
*Extremely severe and danerous side-effects:*
Adjustment: -.20

In the event the GM makes use of the **DMG's** powers/effects tables, an alternate values system may be used:

| | |
|---|---|
| Table 1 powers: | +5,000gp* |
| Table 2 powers: | +7,500gp* |
| Table 3 powers: | -3,000gp* |
| Table 4 powers: | -5,000gp* |
| Table 5 powers: | +25,000gp* |
| Table 6 powers: | -10,000gp* |

*per power

Note that these values are based exclusively on the powers of the device and do not consider any extra value from jewel encrustation, mithril fittings, etc.

Curiously, the **DMG** indicates no experience is to be gained by keeping an artifact or relic. While the rationale behind this is not revealed, if the GM chooses to allow experience if the item is kept, a figure of 20% of the item's value is not unreasonable.

Lastly, items such as cursed scrolls or rings of delusion should have a value based on the degree of banefulness they exert as suggested below:

*Minor:*
Suggested value: 100 - 1,000gp
*Moderate:*
Suggested value: 1,100 - 2,000gp
*Severe:*
Suggested value: 2,100 - 3,000gp
*Extremely severe and dangerous:*
Suggested value: 3,000 - 12,000gp

# Eternal Soldier

**Published By: *Tai-Gear Simulations***
**Designed By: Chris Arnold, Rob Arnold, and Joe Mays**
**Price: $14.95**
**Reviewed By Rick Swan**

I guess you know when you've got something good when the the clones start crawling out of the woodwork. The latest serving of sincere flattery for ***Steve Jackson's* GURPS** is **Eternal Soldier**, a role-playing system for "Adventures in Any Age" that is, sad to report, not even a nice try. The pros at ***SJ Games*** had a hard enough time ironing out all the bugs in **GURPS** - did these guys really think they could do better?

The 150-plus page book looks like it was laid out on a computer by somebody who couldn't their hands off the font controls - the character sheet (1 page) has no less than 9 different type styles. The magic supplement is printed in some kind of italics that I guess is supposed to make it look mysterious. Illustrations range from the lousy (a wizard whose head grows out of his chest) to the inane (the 3 Stooges with masks and capes) to the incomprehensible (a full page diagram of a cigarette lighter - ?). The writing is hopelessly clumsy, peppered with irritating attempts at humor (a poor roll for an attempted artistic endeavor gives a "Studied art under Pia Zadora" result) and endless urgings for us helpless players to make up rules as we see fit (From the magic rules: "WE DON'T CARE! Feel free to make your own!"). Want science fiction? "Plotlines can be easily gained from any number of stories and/or movies.... Feel free to develop strange creatures to inhabit alien worlds." Want encounter charts?"....it is not our place to tell you what is in your world."

Most of the **Eternal Soldier** systems are embarrassingly derivative. Basic attributes include Strength, Agility, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Will, Comliness, and Charisma. Roll 3d6 for each for a range of 3-18. Basic attributes for **AD&D** are Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, Charisma. Roll 3d6 for each for a range of 3-18. An attribute roll in **Eternal Soldier** requires the character to roll 1d20 against an attribute, such as Constitution or Dexterity; if he rolls this score or less, he suffers no ill effects. In **AD&D**, an Ability Check requires the character to roll 1d20 against an attribute, such as Constitution or Dexterity; if he rolls this score or less, he suffers no ill effects. To successfully use a skill, an **Eternal Soldier** character must roll his skill % on d100 dice; if he rolls under his score, he succeeds. To successfully use a **Call Of Cthulhu** (and other ***Chaosium*** games), character must roll his skill % on d100 dice, if he rolls under his score, he succeeds. Get the picture?

The systems that flirt with originality are woefully under-developed, absurdly complex, or both. Initiative, for instance, divides game time into half-second segments. Each action requires a certain number of segments. Modified by a character's agility, each action has a "speed class." A chart helps determine speed classes, but ultimately it's up to the referee to assign values - with these vague rules, how likely is it that Ref A and Ref B will come up with the same speed class for, say, a hurled boomerang? Combat requires keeping track of speed classes, segments, combat skill checks, and movement, a nightmarish mess when more than a couple of characters are involved. The wrestling rules look promising, but 3 skimpy pages just aren't enough to do an adequate job. (I'm still not quite sure what "suffocation points" are all about.)

Small publishers attempting to get into the game business would be wise to scrounge up a copy of **Eternal Soldier** to avoid repeating the same mistakes. There are sound reasons not to slavishly copy **GURPS**, **AD&D**, and other established products, not the least of which is that there's not exactly a hoard of wealthy role-players waiting to buy this kind of stuff. 3rd-world publishers would do both themselves and the hobby a service by concentrating on topics and approaches that the majors are unwilling or uninterested in tackling (**Teenagers From Outer Space** is a prime example). Where, for instance, are the role-playing games about politicians? About mad scientists? Movie Producers? Motorcycle gangs? Talking vegetables?

The Eternal Soldier designers had a pretty good idea staring them in the face. Snip out the wresting rules on pages 77-80, expand them into a supplement with stats and profiles for a couple of dozen Hulk Hogan and Iron Sheikh types, and - ta da-a-a-aa!! - **All-Star Wresting Role-Playing!** I might buy 1 of those myself.

(For more information about **Eternal Soldier**, contact ***Tai-Gear Simulations***, PO Box 2231, Indianapolis, IN 46206-2231.)

# "Hey Dave, What's with the Castle?"

## A Biography

### By David L. Arneson

I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1947. In 1966-67 I attended Hamlin University. In the years 1967-72 I attended the University of Minnesota. Graduating from there in 1972 with a BA in History and Political Science.

In 1972, my first set of game rules were published. These rules were titled **Don't Give Up The Ship**. They were published by ***Guidon Games***. Also in 1972 I began to write what was later to become **D&D**. In 1974 **D&D** was published by ***Tactical Studies Rules (TSR)***. In 1975, the **Blackmoor** supplement to **D&D** was published by ***TSR***.

From 1974 until 1976, I worked with **TSR** as Director of Research. It was also in 1974 that I took the first in a series of classes called POWER FOR ABUNDANT LIVING. By the middle of 1975 I had also taken the intermediate class in the PFAL series.

In 1977 the 2nd booklet on the **Blackmoor** campaign was published by ***Judges Guild***. This work was titled **The First Fantasy Campaign**.

Also in 1977 I joined a Civil War re-enactment group in Minnesota called The 1st Minnesota Volunteer Infantry.

In 1977 and 1978 I worked as an editor with ***Heritage Models*** on various sets of rules.

In 1978 I coordinated a Bible Fellowship in my home. In 1978, ***Heritage Models*** published **The Dungeonmaster's Index** for **D&D**.

In 1979 I wrote a new set of role playing rules titled **Adventures In Fantasy** that was published by ***Excaliber Games***. It was also in 1979 that I took the advanced calss of the PFAL series.

In 1980 I worked with ***4-D Interactive Systems*** designing computer wargames, sparking an interest in computer game designs that later took me to ***Coleco*** in 1982. I worked on such games as **FROGGER** and **VENTURE.**

In 1981 I founded ***Adventure Games*** (1981-85). We published several supplements for FRP rules as well as general game titles.

In 1983 I had the honor to serve on the Board of Directors of The 1st MInnesota (83-84). That same year I became involved with ***Flying Buffalo, Inc.***, a computer PBM company, in which I am still a stockholder.

In 1984 I married Frankie Morneau. We have one daughter, Malea, who is an avid gymnast.

In 1985 my family came to San Francisco as a part of the Word Over The World Bible study program sponsored by The Way International. We have lived in San Francisco since then and enjoy the area very much.

In 1985-86 I worked as an editor for ***Sleuth Publications*** of San Francisco. I also worked on various development projects in the gaming field.

1986 saw the first two modules based on the **Blackmoor** campaign published by ***TSR***. These modules were to be the first in a series of several modules based on the 1st FRP campaign. At least 6 more **Blackmoor** modules were planned. However, by 1987, only 4 had appeared.

Plans for a possible novel due out in 1988 were also dropped. **Blackmoor** is notable as the first FRP campaign. **Blackmoor** began in late 1972 and is still being played today.

In 1986 my wife and I wrote a **Sherlock Holmes** mystery story that was published in 1986 in **Different Worlds**, a fantasy mystery magazine, a first for both of us.

In 1988 began doing writing for **Computer Game Review**, **SG/FG**, and some other well-known publications. I also have agreed to work with ***3W*** on their proposed line of role-playing products. In other areas I have started worked with some California educators on a simple introductory set of role-playing rules for use in the classroom as an educational tool.

Today I also continue, with my wife, to be active in our Bible Study Fellowship.

In my "spare" time I am still an avid reader, still paint miniature figures, and referee one historical campaign plus a couple of fantasy ones.

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# Space Combat:
## Funky, Yet Fun

**Published By:**
*Twin Engine Gaming*
3254 Maple Leaf Court
San Jose, CA 95121
(408) 270-2466
**Designed and Developed By:**
Werner Freitas
**Price:**
Rulebook is $1, Turns are $3. Turns in gamma games started before 6/30/89 are $1.50 a turn. Rulebooks are free from now until 6/30/89.
**Complexity:** Moderate (equivalent to Fleet Maneuvers)
**Rules Clarity:** Excellent
**Reviewed By:**
J.W. Akers-Sassaman

It's rare to see truly innovative PBM games. It's rarer still to see an innovative PBM game that is easy to learn but still capable of challenging the advanced player. Luckily for those who enjoy tactical space combat, ***Twin Engine Gaming*** offers just a game, simply entitled **Space Combat**.

An intriguing game background, excellently produced and crystal clear rules and easy to read turn sheets crisply produced on a laser writer set the stage for what proves to be a very enjoyable game.

Although it has a generic name, action in **Space Combat** is anything but. ***Twin Engine Gaming*** encourages diplomacy, but the focus of the game is shooting people, plain and simple, and points are awarded to those who use their weapons. As a result, the action is fast and furious, and it will be a rare turn that your units don't see combat.

In **Space Combat**, 10 players enter an arena to fight a trial by combat for the rights to exploit a recently discovered area of space. In the 3-D game, the arena is 16 cubes on a side, with no "wrap-around". The 2-D game's arena is 25 by 25 squares, but "wraps around" to create an limitless playing field.

Combat in the arena is waged from living creatures called Kolobians. In addition to the "parent" KOLOBIAN, the alien creature that has volunteered to be a base/communications network, players direct a variety of Kolobian "offspring".

From the kolobian base, players first set production levels for their "Action Modules", the "mental DNA" parents use to send instructions to the offspring. Players can also use the parent KOLOBIAN to conduct a long range scan, reinforce defenses, (slowly) move away from an advancing attack force or even produce more offspring.

The offspring range from small, lightly protected but quick moving Aals to the monstrous Phos, which are slow and ponderous but well protected and capable of producing an amazing display of offensive firepower.

In between the Kolobian equivalent of a patrol boat and a battleship are 3 other offspring, the Bro (a quick firing destroyer); the Ghu (light cruiser); and the Inu (heavy cruiser).

Depending on their size, the offspring can do several options each turn, up to a maximum of 10 for the stealthily Aal. They can move, sense for enemies, determine the relative health of nearby foes, heal their wounds and/or fire their weapons.

Like the unusual ships/offspring, the weapons found in Space Combat are unlike anything you have ever seen before. Ranging from the Psychic Scream (the rough equivalent of a short-range blaster) to the virus attacks, which allow you to seize control of an enemy, and the dreaded Inverse Mine, "miniature black holes of Kolobian matter" capable of destroying all but the most sturdy offspring, the wide range of weapons give aspiring tacticians plenty of options.

This wide range of options is one of the game's strongest points. Each offspring has its pluses and minuses (the Ghu, for example, specializes in the Virus Infection, while the Bro is very adept about quickly spewing Spores at your enemy), but all units are well-balanced, and there appears to be no mixture of units that guarantees victory. The game is easy enough that the tactical neophyte can win, but challenging enough so that it rewards careful planning and clever attacks.

The victory conditions are well-thought out and enliven the action by penalizing boring defensive strategies. Players collect points for destroying other Kolobians, and are penalized points during the mid- and end- games if they don't attack their enemies. Although technically only one person can win a game of **Space Combat**, mere survival counts as a moral victory.

The games other pluses are legion. ***Twin Engine Gaming*** has designed "smart" turn sheets customized for each position that make it a snap to fill out turns. The turn results sheet clearly lists your actions, in English, as you and your units perceive it. The 24 pages rule book is concise, well-written and filled with excellent examples and pertinent and well-drawn artwork showing your unusual units.

Better yet, they are GM's who strive to provide the ultimate in customer service. When it comes to processing turns, ***Twin Engine Gaming*** is lightning fast, generally having them in the return mail within 24 hours of the due date. Turns are also error free. Although current games of **Space Combat** are billed as a "gamma test", my turns have always been free of input errors and computer bugs, a record that many other PBM companies would undoubtedly envy.

The game's shortcomings are few, and Twin Engine Gaming closely heeds player input to continually improve their product. The only lasting comment I have heard is inherent to the design itself: Some people balk at the premise of warfare in alien creatures (instead of the more typical using alien ships) and thus refuse to even try the game. This is their loss, because they're certainly missing out on an innovative, quick-paced and overall very satisfying tactical space game that is one of the best in this universe, or any other, for that matter.

# Coming Next Issue . . .

**Space Gamer previews TSR's 2nd Edition AD&D,**

**Dr. Niav's Papers - A GURPS Adventure,**

**An American Auto Duel Association Self Quiz,**

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**Space Combat** was designed to be easy to learn, but difficult to master. Every game starts with ten players, and as each is eliminated, the chances of the game ending will increase. Turnsheets are custom made on a laser printer to aid you in filling out your next turn. The games run about 12-16 turns. Cost is $3.00 per turn. A rulebook (required before you can join) is only $1.00.

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# Space/Fantasy Reader

### By J. Michael Carapula

By the time you read this, I'm still be reeling from the sultry summer of '88. The heat's bedragging effects apparently extended to the summer's crop of SF/ Fantasy books, as 3 of the 5 books below are reprints of 1987 releases. Then again, maybe I was too worn out to find new ones. Anyway, enjoy.

**The Legacy of Heorot**
***Pocket Publishing***
**Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, and Steven Barnes**
**383 pages, $4.50**

Just how do 3 people write a novel anyway? **Legacy** is a terrifying tale of colonial adventure. Earth's first interstellar colony is Avalon, a fertile planet orbiting Tau Ceti. Life there is blissfully idyllic until war veteran Cadmann Weyland warns of a carniverous presence, a warning which goes unheeded until it is too late. The malevolent creatures, called grendels after the Beowulf saga, are large dinosaur-shaped amphibians that move extremely fast thanks to a powerful adrenalin gland. Soon the colony is turned into a fortress, and Cadmann and his cohorts begin the process of exterminating the grandels until all is safe. However, their extinction results in an ecological disaster, one that the colonists fail to foresee due to Hibernation Instability, a memory-lapsing side effect of cold sleep. The story then becomes a war of survival between human and grendel.

As can be expected from the Niven/Pournelle/Barnes camp, **The Legacy of Heorot** is a well-told story populated by fully-realized characters. The personal interplay between Cadmann and his comrades is the strength of the novel, especially in light of the fact that the reader figures out grendel ecology sooner that the characters. The grendels are a wonderfully frightening creation, and the authors generously let us into their heads by occasionally giving them a first-person perspective. After all, this a life-or-death struggle for both species, and it is this double tension that makes the book stand out. Recommended.

**The Rapture Effect**
***Tor Books***
**Jeffery A. Carver**
**371 pages, $3.95**

It would appear that Carver couldn't decide whether to write a book about cyberspace, alien cultures, or galactic battles, so he combined all three and came up with **The Rapture Effect**. The Argus system is the focal point of simultaneous interest between a colonial fleet from Earth and an alien society searching for its lost ancestors. A sentient A1, called The Ghostic Computer System, which belongs to a vast Terran corporation, finds itself fighting a war with the aliens, and suddenly decides it wants no part of it. It s plan is to allow 4 hotshot programmer/artists to alter its command restrictions so that it can play 'peacemaker" between the two factions (it's never made clear just why the megabrain suddenly decides to do this). Interestingly, the computer decides to use dance as a sort of "universal language" to bring the species together. The story shifts between the 4 main characters and their "raptured" communication with the A1 core, the colonial fleet and its confrontation with the aliens, and the aliens themselves, called "Ell", who are capable of perfect communal memory. There are lots of abstract scenes in the book involving cyberspace and the Ell's shared mental world, which Carver handles quite deftly, but not enough really occurs to merit the book's length. Momentum continually builds, but there are never enough twists or turns in the plot. As my opening sentence implied, the author seems to have been trying to do too much, and sacrificed a good story in the process. A lot of dress-up ideas with nowhere to go.

**Equal Rites**
***Signet Books***
**Terry Pratchett**
**254 pages, $3.50**

So many comparisons have been made between Terry Pratchett and Douglas Adams that is it difficult to write an original review of his books without invoking the latter's name several times over. If you enjoyed the first couple of his **Discworld** fantasies (**The Colour of Magic** and **The Light Fantastic**, both ***Signet***) for their lightheartness, then you might find his latest, **Equal Rites**, less to your taste. This is not to say that Pratchett is turning to excessive seriousness, but he is speculating on some interesting concepts this time out. The book follows the torrentuous childhood of Eskarina, an eight daughter of an eight son of a wizard, who was supposed to turn out male so that the staff of magic could be passed to him (her). You see, females are not allowed to be wizards, that stately epithet being reserved to graduates of Unseen University, a male-only institution. There's nothing to stop her from learning witchcraft, however, and this she does from her Granny Weatherwax, village witch and resident old crone. But the staff that belonged to Eskarina's late grandfather has a mind of its own, and it becomes apparent that Esk is destined to be a wizard despite the social obstacles. So Granny and Esk take on the stodgy masters of the university at their own game (magic), and after a brilliant male student casts one spell too many, Esk is forced to save **Discworld** from certain doom. Pratchett's wit is still intact here, and his brilliantly hilarious metaphors come at a rapid-fire rate. What perhaps make the book more absorbing than its predecessors is its

notion of magic based on perception, what Pratchett calls "headology". What you think is real becomes real . . . and the universe is a collective "idea" made up by its inhabitants. While not a terribly original concept, it comes alive here amidst the fanciful farce and is treated with a sense of wonder. A think-while-you-laugh treat. See, I didn't mention Adams once.

**Druid's Blood**
***Signet Books***
**Esther M. Friesnet**
**279 pages, $3.50**

Victorian England is a popular setting for SF and Fantasy writers these days . . . and why not, since science-fiction was essentially born during that period? **Druid's Blood** disposes of the established historical settings favored by the likes of Tim Powers, and instead creates an entirely alternate one. Freisner's Britain is based on the notion that druidic and other forms of Celtic magic drove off the Romans, and a line of magical royalty has preserved the power ever since. Queen Victoria, portrayed here as lusty, powerful, but ultimately helpless, is threatened by usurpation in the guise of Lord Kitchener, who, during his military campaigns, acquired the knowledge of Eastern arcana, and plans on destroying the druid's power. Into this scene comes the narrator, John H. Weston and his companion, Brihtric Doone, an actor portraying a consulting detective who bears a marked resemblance to a certain fictional hero from our universe. As the plot unfolds, many "alternative" personnae, show up, including Jack The Ripper, Oscar Wilde, H.G. Wells, an anachronistic Lord Byron, and Arthur Elric Boyle (great play-on-words with the middle name). The story excels in its portrayal of Weston, a Pictish mage by his own right, but under a curse from his ex-lover that prevents him from using magic. His blossoming relationship with Victoria is the strength of the novel. The story suffers from Donne's inability to solve the mysteries herein without total reliance on a binary cryptogram from Byron. Weaker still is the ending, which sinks to all-too-familiar swords-and-sorcery cliche. I also wish Friesner had explored the history of her alternative world a little deeper. Still, the writing is beautifully fluid and there is ample humor and plenty of in-jokes for the dedicated Sherlockian. A fair but promising novel.

**The Black Tower**
***Bantam Books***
**Richard A. Lupoff**
**339 pages, $3.95**

**The Black Tower** is the first volume of Philip Jose Farmer's **The Dungeon** series. The books in this series will all have a common setting, **The Dungeon**, a vast and mysterious world-size prison containing creatures from across time and space. Farmer's role is "editor and overseer", although it appears that the series is primarily the brainchild of artist Byron Preiss. **The Black Tower** reads very much like an Edgar Rice Burroughs novel (of whom Lupoff is a noted authority), since it deals with hardy souls in deepest Africa stumbling into a lost world. The action starts in 19th-Century London (again!) with the decision of Clive Folliot to mount an expedition into Africa to seek the whereabouts of his lost brother. He meets and allies several characters on the way, including Sergeant Smythe, master of disguises, and the enigmatic Sidi Bombay. Once in Africa, the teams enters **The Dungeon** through a crystal rock, and there Folliot begins tracing his brother's whereabouts via old journal in which new entries mysteriously appear. The story is very straightfoward, little more than a series of encounters, with an underlying plot about a girl from the future who talks like a computer. Lupoff's writing is sparse and somewhat colorless, which is a handicap in an adventure of this sort. What's especially frustrating is that very few of the many mysteries presented in the novel are resolved at the end, which will surely annoy the reader. The book is fast and at times fun, but be warned that it is far from a complete work. It seems to me that even novels that are part of a series should be able to stand on their own.

## Reprints and Anthologies

Tim Powers **The Anubis Gates** (***Ace***) is destined to become a classic time-travel novel (perhaps it is already) . . . highly recommended. **Green Magic: The Fantasy Realms of Jack Vance** (***Tor***) is a good collection by an original fantasy writer. Also Norman Spinrads's **Little Heros** (***Bantam***), and (finally) an omnibus collection long overdue, four of Edgar Rice Burroughs' **Tarzan** novels (***Crown/Avenel***).


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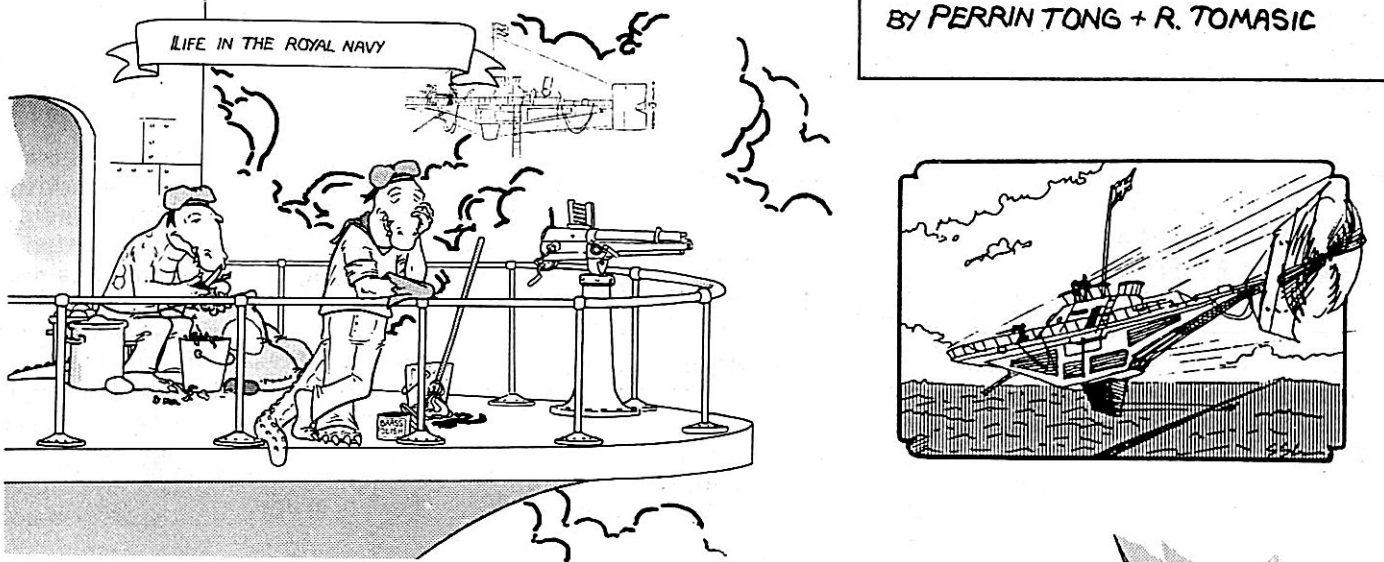
# GATOR-AIDE

BY PERRIN TONG + R. TOMASIC



# SPACE GAMER/ FANTASY GAMER

## Feedback Questions

Issue #85 Jan/Feb 1989

How to use the Feedback Response Card: After you've finished reading this issue of **Space Gamer/Fantasy Gamer,** please read the feedback questions below, and give us your answers by writing the answer-numbers on the card in the response boxes which correspond to each questions number. The response card is stapled in the center of the magazine

Please be sure to answer all questions (but do not write anything in the boxes ior question-numbers labeled "no question"). Your answers will help steer **Space Gamer/Fantasy Gamer** magazine, which will, in turn, help steer the hobby.

What the numbers mean: When answering questions, "0" or a dash "-" always means NO OPINION or NOT APPLICABLE. When a questions requires a "yes or no" answer, "1" means YES and "2" means NO. When the question is a rating question, "1" is the WORST rating, "9" is the BEST rating, "5" is an AVERAGE rating, and all numbers in between express various shades of approval or disapproval.

The following questions ask you to rate the articles in this issue (1 = poor; 9 = excellent; 0 = non opinion). In the case of reviews, be sure to rate the article, not the game, book, or product reviewed!

1. Editorial
2. Letters
3. Scanner
4. Convention Calendar
5. SPACE: 1889
6. Mechwarrior Aliens
7. Starjammer Yacht
8. Corsair Contention
9. A Fistful Of Laughs
10. Underwater Bond
11. Project File: Discovery
12. Slow Training Coming
13. SG Reviews
14. Effug The Giant
15. House Rules For AD&D
16. Dragons
17. The Giant Squid
18. Morality
19. Dave Arneson Bio
20. Spy Class-Stormbringer
21. TFT Talents
22. RQ Metals
23. Magic Gone Astray
24. XP & GP Values for new magic items
25. Murphy's Rules
26. Feedback questions
27. Cover Art
28. Issue Graphics
29. Print Quality
30. Space/Fantasy Reader
31. Gator-Aide
32. Gamer's Guide Classified
33. This issue overall.
34. Was this issue better than the last one?

35. Are you a subscriber to **SG/FG?**

36. How long have you had a continuous subscription to **SG/FG?** 0 = I'm not a subscriber, 1 = This is my first through third issue, 2 = This is my fourth through sixth issue, 3 = This is my second continuous year as a subscriber, 4 = I've been a subscriber for over two years.

37. How long have you been a regular reader of **SG/FG?** 0 = not a regular reader, 1 = less than a year, 2 = one to three years, 3 = more than three years.

38 How many others, besides yourself, will read this copy of **SG/FG?** 0 = none, 1 = 1, 2 = 2...9 = 9 or more

39 Where did you first find out about **SG/FG?** 1 = Saw it in a store, 2 = Saw an ad for it, 3 = A friend showed me a copy.

40. Assume that you don't subscribe to **SG/FG.** Would the quality of this issue be enough to get you to subscribe?

41. Did you send in the feedback card for your last issue of **SG/FG?**

42. Your age: 1 = 13 years or less, 2 = 14-17, 3 = 18-21, 4 = 22-27, 5 = 28-33, 6 = 34-39, 7 = 40 plus.

43. Your sex: 1 = male, 2 = female.

44. Your income: 1 = less than $15,000, 2 = $15,000-$20,000, 3 = $21,000-$25,000, 4 = $26,000-$30,000, 5 = over $30,000.

45. Your years of education: 1 = 11 years of less, 2 = High School Graduate, 3 = 13-15 years, 4 = 13-15 years and still in college, 5 = College Graduate, 6 = Still in school for a higher degree, 7 = Master or Professional Credentials, 8 = Doctorate.

46. How long have you been playing Science Fiction/Fantasy games?(Board, Computer, Miniatures, Play-By-Mail, and Role-Playing) 0 = less than a year, 1 = 1 year, 2 = 2 years...9 = 9 or more years.

47. How many SF/F games (don't count modules or supplements) do you posssess? 0 = none, 1 = 1-9, 2 = 10-19, 3 = 20-29, 4 = 30-39, 5 = 40 or more.

48. What is the average number of hours you spend playing SF/F games? 0 = none, 1 = 1-9 hours, 2 = 10-19 hours, 3 = 20-29 hours, 4 = 30-39 hours, 5 = 40 hours or more.

49. How much of your gaming is done on a computer? 0 = none, 1 = very little, 5 = half, 9 = all.

50. How much of your gaming is solitaire? 0 = none, 1 = very little, 5 = half, 9 = all.

51. What is the average amount of money do you spend on gaming each month? 1 = less than $10, 2 = $10-$19, 3 = $20-$29, 4 = $30-$39, 5 = $40-$49, 6 = $50-$59, 6 = $60-$69, 7 = $70-$79, 8 = $80-$89, 9 = $90 or more.

52. Are you involved in any PBM games?

53. If you answered yes to the above question, how many do you play? 1 = 1...9 = 9 or more.

54. How many hours a month do you spend on your PBM game(s)? 1 = 1...9 = 9 hours or more.

55. What is the average amount of money do you spend per month on your PBM game(s)? 1 = less than $10, 2 = $10-$19, 3 = $20-$29, 4 = $30-$39, 5 = $40-$49, 6 = $50-59, 7 = $60-$69, $70-$79, 8 = $80-89, 9 = $90 plus.

56.. What complexity scale are your favorite games(all types)? 1 = introductory, 2 = low, 3 = moderate, 4 = fairly, 5 = highly.

57. What is your favorite gaming period: 1 = Science Fiction, 2 = Fantasy, 3 = Both, 4 = Other(please state on reposnse card)

Please answer the following questions about the below listed magazines with a: 0 = I don't read it, 1 = I read a friend's copy, 2 = I subscribe to it, 3 = I buy it at a store.

58. The Dragon
59. Dungeon
60. Adventurer's Club
61. Autoduel Quarterly
62. Battle Technology
63. White Wolf
64. Gateways
65. Stardate
66. Breakout
67. White Dwarf
68. Computer Gaming World
69. Paper Mayhem
70. Flagship
71. Challenge
72. Different Worlds
73. Traveller's Digest

74. Do you read comic books?

75. If you ansered yes to the above question, how many do you own? 0 = none, 1 = 1-20, 2 = 21-40, 3 = 41-60, 4 = 61-80, 5 = 81-100, 6 = 101-200, 7 = 201-300, 8 = 301-400, 9 = 400 or more.

76. How much do you spend per month on comic books? 0 = none, 1 = $1-$20, 2 = $21-$40, 3 = $41-$60, 4 = $61-$80, 5 = $81 = $100, 6 = $101-$120, 7 = $121-$140, 8 = $141-$160, 9 = $161 or more.

# Gamer's Guide: Classified

The Gamer's Guide: Classified is a service we provide our readers. As you might expect with ads of this kind, "let the buyer beware." This magazine makes no guarantes to any seller's claim, nor is responsible or liable for such. You're on your own.

Each ad is allowed 30 words of text plus a name, address and phone numbers (home, indicated by an H-; and work indicated by a W-) and runs for three consecutive issues.

There are 7 categories in which you may place your ad: Opponents Wanted, $1; Buy, Sell, Trade, $2; Game Clubs, $4; Publications, $8; Play-by-mail, $8,; Retail, $8; and Wholesale, $8. The costs for running different types of ads are as indicated.

All ads should be sent, along with checks or money orders made payable to:

SG/FG
Dept: GGC
P.O. Box 8399
Long Beach, CA 90808

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## Buy/Sell/Trade

WANTED: Star Trek Role Playing Game suplements; especially Star Trek III (3) sourcebook and the triangle supplement. Photocopy OK. Will pay reasonable price. Send SASE to:
David A. Englander
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Corona del Mar, CA 92625
H-(714) 640-2777

Wanted: Old out of print S&Ts in mint, unpunched condition only. Contact:
Kelly Jessop
426 S. Lee St. A3
Americus, GA 31709
H-(912) 924-2750 after 5pm

SALE: Over 250 magazines like - Dragon, White Dwarf, Space Gamer - lots of Traveller items and games. 300+ wargames by - AH, SPI, GDW, Victory and much more! Send 2 stamps for list.
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Ed Edwards
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FOR SALE: Numerous games and magazines. AH, SPI, GDW and more. Many out of print. Send LSASE for list to:
Wayne Close
1740 Maple Ave.
Northbrook, IL 60062

Die-hard TFTer seeking original/copy of INTERPLAY #1; $20/$10 respectively.
Paul Wagner
1335 West Blvd. #3
Cleveland, OH 44102
H-(216) 961-8235 (after mid.)

Fantasy Adventure Hats ($5), T-Shirts ($6), Leather Patches ($2), Bookmarkers ($2)! Choose from: Enchanter, Norse Halfling, French Warrior, Confronting Knights.
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H-(312) 361-2999

## Game Clubs

Why not list your game club here? See instructions at the beginning of the Classified, and start finding more gamers in your local area!

**Santa Fe Springs Gamers Association.** All types of BG's and RPG's. All ages. New members welcome! Tues/Thurs 5-9pm, Saturdays 9am-5pm. Town Center Hall,S11740 E. Telegraph Rd, Santa Fe Springs, CA or call (213) 863-4896 during club hours.

## Publications

**Alpha Supplement Omega** is expanding to 24 pages! This amateur sci-fi magazine is the official Fanzine of the Star Battles Association (SBA) containing news and up to date info on STARBATTLES (Mainline), plus reviews and info on other products available from FCS. Send $2.00 plus your name and address for the latest issue:
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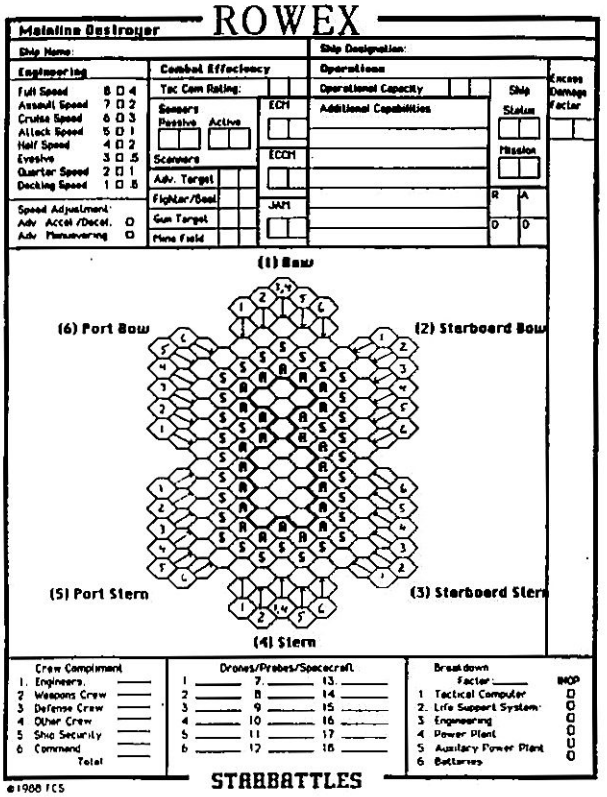


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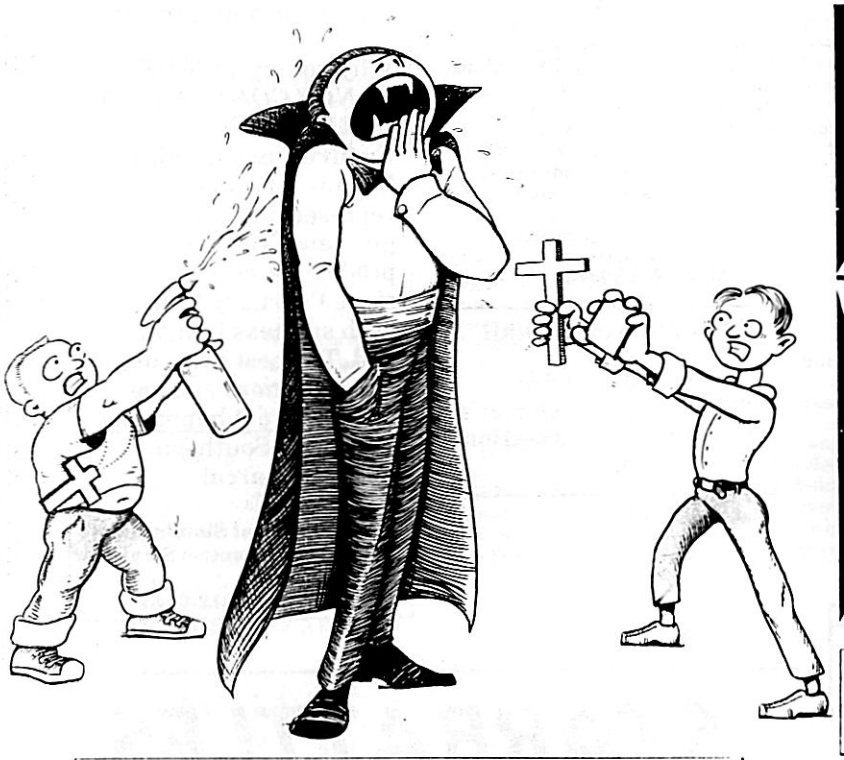
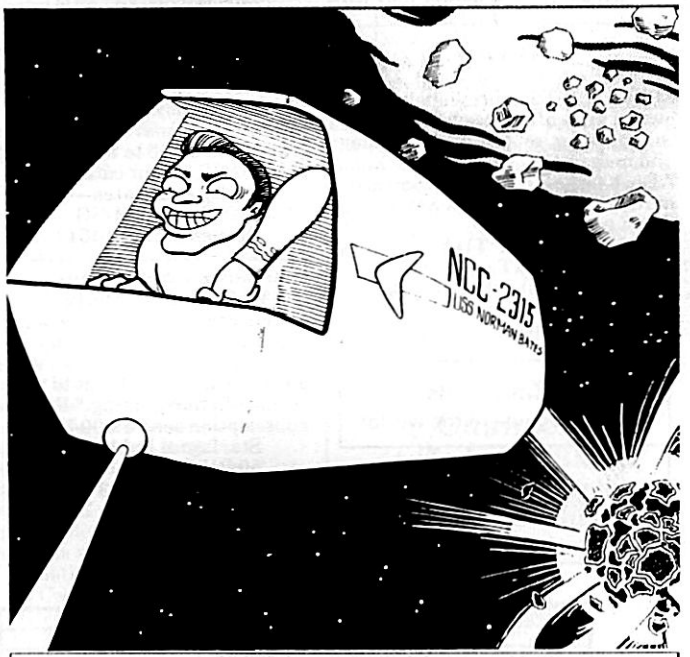
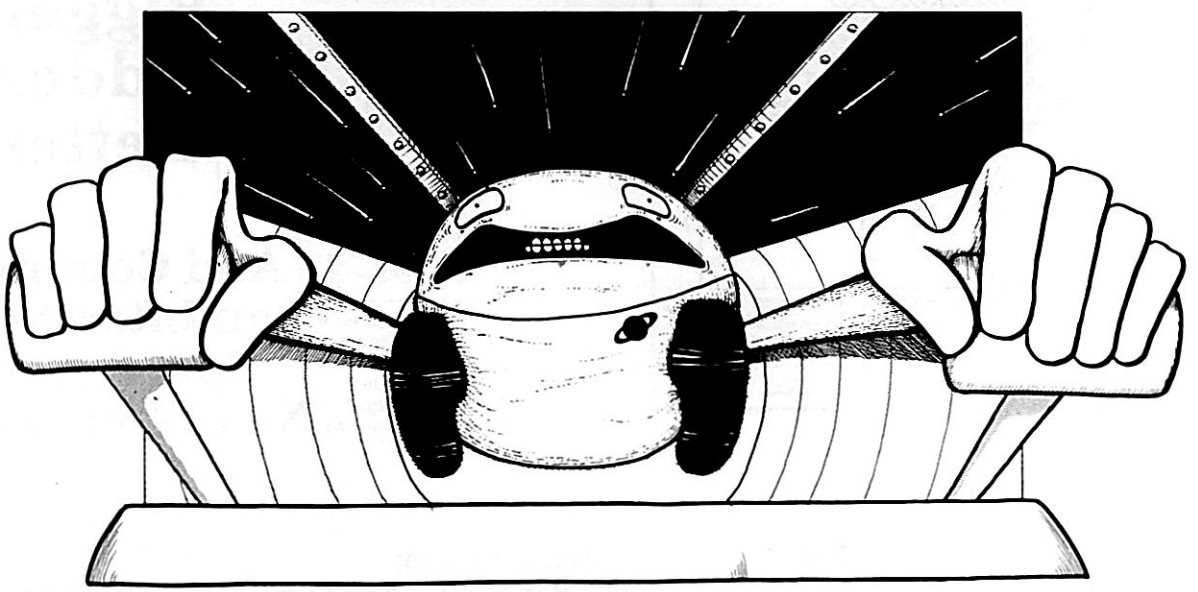
# MURPHY'S RULES



In ***METAGAMING***'s **IN THE LABYRINTH** a vampire of IQ 14 or higher does not believe in the superstition about crosses, holy water, etc. and is not affected by them - *Karl Dishaw*




In ***TASK FORCE GAMES***'s **STAR FLEET BATTLES** a 10-meter shuttlecraft can destroy planets in a matter of seconds - *Michael Iacca*



Spaceships in ***YAQUINTO***'s **SHOOTING STARS** have a minimum acceleration of 100 G's - *William Phillips*

SPACE'D
89
MMPH!
...SOMEWHERE ON MARS...
* INSIDE A NEARBY SWILLERY *
HEEELP!
SOUNDS LIKE TROUBLE MATE...
YEP,... TOLD YOU THINGS WOULD STIR UP QUICK ON THIS PLANET!
SHOULD WE RESCUE HER?
NAW, LET THE BIMBO DIE!
YO! BARKEEP, ANOTHER BALROG ON THE ROCKS, AND THIS TIME, EASY ON THE...
YEEOW!!
FWOOM!
FLAMES!!!
UH OH...
I SAY!
—ENTER-LEFTENANT WILLIAMS
YOU MEN THERE! FOLLOW ME! SOME GERMAN SWINE JUST MADE OFF WITH MISS MOLLY!!
MISS MOLLY?!
YOU MEAN...
YES! THE DAUGHTER OF LE'DUCK, THE RICHEST MERCHANT ON VENUS
...ER, "RICHEST"?
RIGHT! AND THERE'S SURE TO BE A GOOD REWARD!!
UH OH!
REWARD!!
YES, PROBABLY MEGA BUCKS!
MEGABUCKS!
J.D.W. ©89
WELL FINEOUS?...
COUNT ME IN FRED, THE BIMBO LIVES!
FIRE!
CHARLY?
ME TOO! BUT YOU REALIZE WE'RE NOT UP AGAINST MERE DRAGONS ANYMORE, THIS PLACE,... REEKS OF CHADWICKIAN FANTASY!!
NEXT: SKY "SKIFFS" OF MARS!

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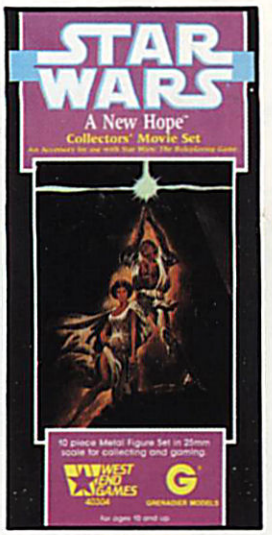
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- ☐ The Star Wars Sourcebook

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- ☐ Star Warriors
- ☐ Assault On Hoth
- ☐ Lightsaber Dueling Pack

Adventures
- ☐ Star Wars Campaign Pack
- ☐ Tatooine Manhunt
- ☐ Strikeforce: Shantipole
- ☐ Battle For The Golden Sun
- ☐ Starfall

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